



Unified Work Program FY 2026

Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Final Report - May 2025



Unified Work Program

**For the planning and related activities to be performed
by the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization,
in FY 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026).**

This document has been prepared by the Region 1 Planning Council in collaboration with its member agencies, partnership organizations, and local stakeholders.

This report was prepared in cooperation with the following:

U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
Rockford Mass Transit Agency (RMTD)
Local Units of Government

The contents, views, policies, and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the above agencies.



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS

For complaints, questions, or concerns about civil rights or nondiscrimination; or for special requests under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact: Kayla Gipson, Director of Finance at (815) 319-4180 or info@r1planning.org.

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Chair, Winnebago County

Chairman Karl Johnson
Vice-Chair, Boone County

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Mayor Clint Morris
City of Belvidere

Mayor Tom McNamara
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City of Loves Park

Michael Stubbe
Rockford Mass Transit District

Trisha Thompson
IDOT- Region 2

MPO Technical Committee

Members

Boone County Highway Dept

Boone County Planning Dept

Boone County Conservation District

Chicago Rockford International Airport

Belvidere Planning Dept

Belvidere Public Works Dept

Loves Park Community Dev.

Loves Park Public Works Dept

Rockford Community Dev. Dept

Rockford Public Works Dept

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County

Four Rivers Sanitary District

IDOT, District 2

Rockford Mass Transit District

Rockford Park District

Machesney Park Community Dev. Dept

Machesney Park Public Works Dept

Village of Roscoe

Village of Winnebago

Winnebago County Highway
Department

Winnebago County Planning &
Economic Dev. Dept

Winnebago Co. Soil & Water
Conservation District

Ex-Officio Members

Boone County Council on Aging

FHWA, Illinois Division

IDOT, Division of Public Transportation

IDOT, Office of Program & Planning

Illinois EPA

Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

Ogle County Highway Department

State Line Area Transportation Study

Stateline Mass Transit District

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Introduction

This Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies all of the planning activities to be conducted by Region 1 Planning Council (R1) during the fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026). These activities are funded with federal, state, and local resources. The UPWP is a federally-required statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan area. It is required to provide descriptions of the planning work and resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, and the cost of said activities.ⁱ

This program has been developed in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD), and local governments in accordance with “Final Ruling on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning” (23 CFR Parts 450 and 771/49 CFR Part 613).

About the Rockford Region

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

Region 1 Planning Council (R1), acting as the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is responsible for planning and coordinating decisions regarding the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area’s (MPA) surface transportation system. It is the responsibility of the MPO to conduct a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process and fulfill the following five core functions:

- Establish a fair and impartial setting for effective regional transportation decision making in the metropolitan area;
- Evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region;
- Maintain a long-range transportation plan covering a 20-year planning horizon;
- Develop a four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and prioritize projects; and
- Involve the public.

Due to the size of the Rockford urbanized area, the Rockford MPO has an additional designation, known as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). A TMA is an urbanized area with a population of over 200,000 individuals, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. MPOs with this designation have additional roles and responsibilities to the

core functions identified above, including the development of a congestion management process (CMP) and project selection for the sub-allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, including the Transportation Alternative (TA) Set-Aside program, and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds.

The MPO is empowered and governed by an interagency agreement known as the MPO Cooperative Agreement that was developed and mutually adopted by the Cities of Rockford, Loves Park, and Belvidere; the Counties of Winnebago and Boone; the Village of Machesney Park; Rockford Mass Transit District; and the State of Illinois acting through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

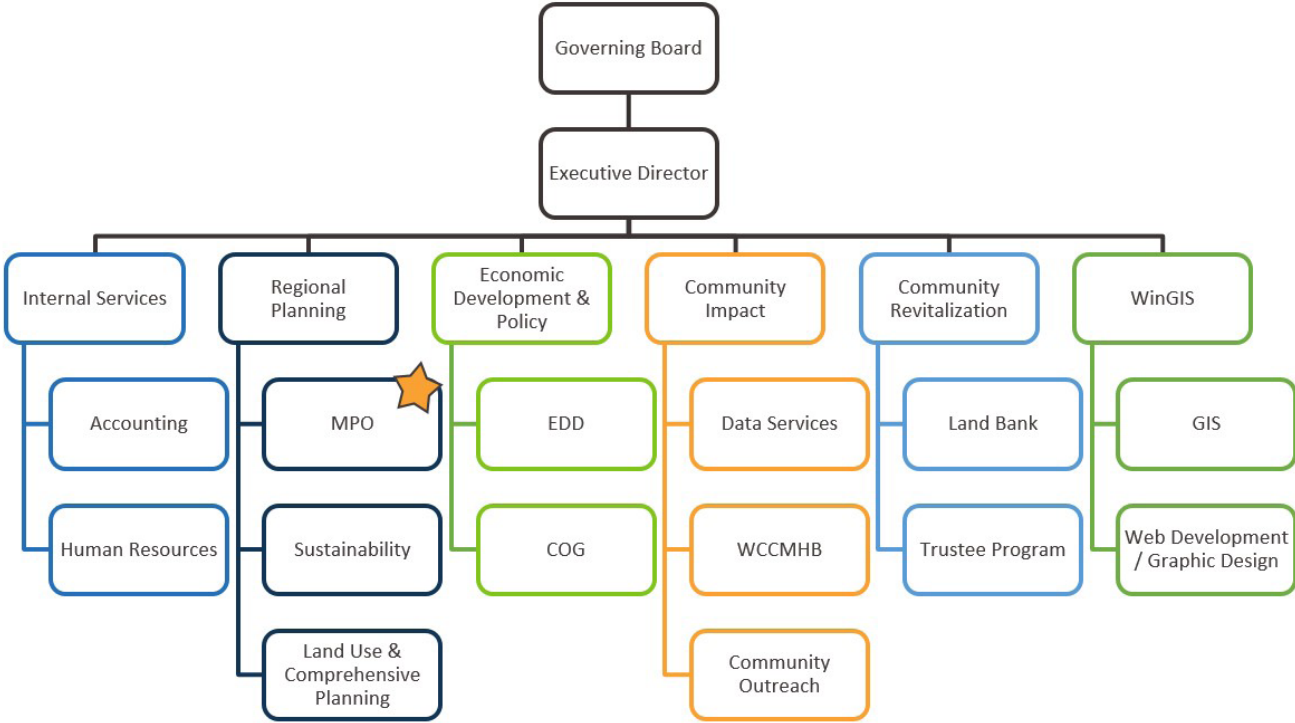
The activities of the MPO are directed by a Policy Committee that consists of the top elected officials from the above entities plus the IDOT Region 2 Engineer and the Chairman of the Rockford Mass Transit District Board. The Policy Committee receives technical recommendations and assistance from a 20-member Technical Committee comprised of planners and/or engineers from the above entities plus various other local partners, such as the Chicago Rockford International Airport and the Rock River Water Reclamation District. Table 1-1 lists the MPO participating agencies serving on the MPO Technical Committee.

Much of the technical work, of the MPO transportation planning function is done by a professional staff under the management of the Director of Regional Planning (MPO Director) in close coordination with R1’s Executive Director. This interaction is graphically illustrated in Figure 1-1. Appendix B displays the current organizational structure of the MPO as well as how the MPO fits into the broader regional framework for collaborative planning.



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Figure 1-1: R1 Organizational Structure



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Table 1-1: Technical Committee

Standing Members
Boone County, Highway Dept.
Boone County, Planning Dept.
Boone County Conservation District
Chicago/Rockford International Airport
City of Belvidere, Planning Dept.
City of Belvidere, Public Works Dept.
City of Loves Park, Community Development Dept.
City of Loves Park, Public Works Dept.
City of Rockford, Community Development Dept.
City of Rockford, Public Works Dept.
Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
Four Rivers Sanitary District
IDOT, District 2
Rockford Mass Transit District
Rockford Park District
Village of Machesney Park, Community Development Dept.

Standing Members
Village of Machesney Park, Public Works Dept.
Village of Roscoe
Village of Winnebago
Winnebago County, Community Dev. Dept.
Winnebago County, Highway Dept.
Winnebago Co. Soil & Water Conservation District

Ex Officio Members
Boone County Council on Aging
FHWA, IL Division
IDOT, Bureau of Planning
IDOT, Division of Public Transportation
IL Tollway
Ogle County, Highway Dept.
Stateline Area Transportation Study
Stateline Mass Transit District

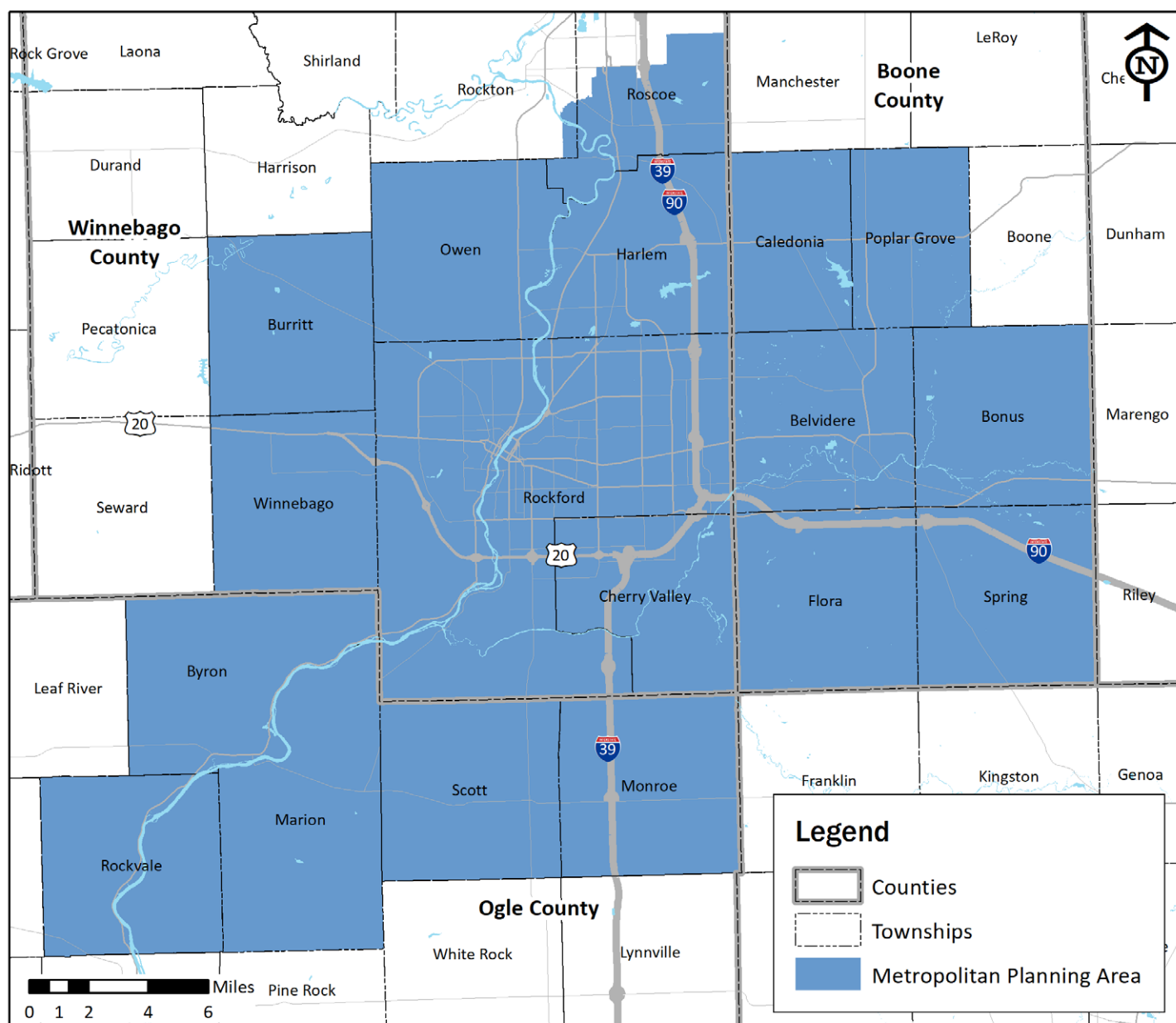
The Planning Area

The Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is located in north-central Illinois, near the state border of Wisconsin. As shown in Figure 1-2, the Rockford MPA is smaller than the boundaries of Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties and covers approximately 680 square miles. The region has relatively flat terrain and is at the confluence of four major river systems in northern Illinois, including the Kishwaukee River, Pecatonica River, Sugar River, and Rock River, the largest and most central.

The City of Rockford forms the primary urban core of the region and is the fifth-largest city in Illinois, encompassing

approximately 64 square miles. In total, the MPA encompasses 15 municipalities, including the Cities of Belvidere, Byron, Loves Park, and Rockford and the Villages of Caledonia, Cherry Valley, Davis Junction, Machesney Park, Monroe Center, New Milford, Poplar Grove, Roscoe, Stillman Valley, Timberlane, and Winnebago. While many of the incorporated jurisdictions within the MPA are a mix of urban and suburban development patterns, some municipalities and unincorporated areas of the MPA are largely agriculturally-based.

Figure 1-2: Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area



Summary of Federal & State Regulations

Unified planning work programs (UPWPs) are required by federal transportation legislation and fall under the responsibility of metropolitan planning organizations (MPO). The development and maintenance of UPWPs are subject to the regulations set forth under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and preceding federal transportation bills. Specifically, they are subject to the regulations outlined under 49 U.S.C. 5303(j) and 49 CFR Part 613. Under this regulation, MPOs are required to:

- Document planning activities performed with funds provided under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
- Cooperation with the State and public transportation operator in the development of the UPWP, including discussion on planning priorities for the MPA;
- Identify work proposed for the next 1- or 2-year period by major activity and task (including activities that address the federal planning factors);
- Provide sufficient detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task; and
- Provide a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds.

Transportation Funding Sources

The transportation planning process coordinated through the MPO is typically funded through several subsidies and programs:

- **FHWA-PL:** Funds provided through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), annually sub-allocated to the MPO by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); used primarily for highway planning, but can be used for other related multi-modal transportation planning work. (20% match required).
- **FTA 5305(d):** Funds provided through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); annually sub-allocated to MPO and other MPOs throughout the State by IDOT; aimed primarily at planning needs related to public transit and paratransit. Public transit agencies typically use 5307 or other sources for their planning activities. (20% match required).

- **State (IDOT) Planning Funds – (SPF):** Funds directly from the State of Illinois (IDOT) for MPO transportation planning purposes only.
- **State Planning & Research Funds (SPR):** Allocated to the States via federal legislation for use on unique planning, research and feasibility studies. The funds are sometimes passed on to local governments for the same purposes. When the MPO receives these funds, a separate intergovernmental agreement is developed and authorized by IDOT and the local governmental body. (20% match required).
- **Local Contribution Funds (LC):** Funds provided by local MPO participants for related planning purposes.

Federal Planning Factors:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism.

Source: 23 CFR § 450.306

Annual Development Process

Each year the MPO undertakes the following steps to develop the upcoming fiscal year's UPWP, in accordance with the "IDOT Metropolitan Planning Organization Cooperative Agreements Manual":

1. **Budget for Federal Planning Marks (November – February):** The MPO receives notice from IDOT regarding the amount of Federal funds (FHWA PL and FTA 5305(d)) available for the next FY to carry out planning activities captured in the UPWP. Once notice is received, the MPO develops and submits a line item budget for IDOT for approval.
2. **Draft the Program (January – March):** The MPO will draft the UPWP in consultation with the MPO Policy Committee and the IDOT Metro Manager throughout all stages.
3. **Preliminary Review (April):** The first draft of the UPWP is provided to the IDOT Metro Manager for preliminary review. The Metro Manager will review the draft UPWP for inconsistencies and ensure that the UPWP budget and scope of work are appropriate and in accordance with federal planning guidance and requirements. IDOT will then return the draft to the MPO for final revisions as necessary.
4. **Approval Process (April - June):** The MPO releases the draft UPWP for a 30-day public comment period. Following this period, MPO staff presents the draft document to the MPO Technical Committee and MPO Policy Committee for recommendation and adoption, respectively.
5. **Final Review (June):** Once the MPO Policy Committee has approved it, the document is officially submitted to IDOT via the designated IDOT Metro Manager. After receiving the UPWPs from a TMA, IDOT submits the document to USDOT for approval.

Agency Outreach & Public Engagement

In the development of the FY 2026 UPWP, stakeholder and public input was afforded throughout the development. The timeline provided below, highlights those opportunities:

- January 23, 2025: MPO Technical Committee Meeting
- January 31, 2025: MPO Policy Committee Meeting
- May 5, 2025 – June 2, 2025: Public Comment Period
- June 18, 2025: MPO Technical Committee Meeting (Recommendation)
- June 20, 2025: MPO Policy Committee Meeting (Approval)

Public comments will be accepted any time before or after adoption and most aspects of this proposed program are amendable for reasonable cause. However, the public is encouraged to provide input as early as possible. Suggestions regarding MPO transportation planning work may be directed to the Executive Director, Technical and Policy Committees at their respective monthly meetings throughout the year. Staff contact information and meeting dates, times, and locations, are available at r1planning.org.

A full list of comments received during the public comment period for this UPWP can be found in Appendix C.

Intergovernmental Agreement

The Federal and State funds referred to in this UPWP will be awarded via an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Illinois Department of Transportation and the MPO. The terms of that IGA supersede this program and govern the use of all Federal and State transportation planning funds and the procedures for obtaining reimbursements for expenses incurred under the terms of the Agreement and this program.

Under the IGA between the MPO and IDOT, the MPO will summarize all activity and reimbursement requests, prepare the required documentation, and submit the requests to IDOT for each month in fiscal year within a timely fashion following each reporting period. Reimbursements from IDOT are sent to the MPO for each invoice submitted.

Work Program

Work Element #1. Management & Administration

Task 1.1 Program Support

Objective: Under this task, the general administration work necessary for the day-to-day operations of Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is conducted.

Activities:

- Administer and maintain operations of the MPO, including the fiscal management, contracts, handling of personnel matters, and the procurement of equipment and supplies required for operations.
- Manage contracts and agreements between the MPO and participating agencies or subcontractors.
- Support contract implementation, management, and compliance.
- Assure equal opportunities to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and minorities in contracts and subcontracts.
- Maintain financial records for departmental contracts and ensure payment of invoices.
- Oversee information technology (IT) needs, including coordinating service providers and completing IT inventory and replacement.
- Procure necessary supplies, office space, and capital equipment, such as computer equipment, and similar equipment necessary for gathering, displaying, or disseminating information.
- Hire and supervise employees.
- Manage employee benefits, perform employee evaluations, set and disburse salaries.
- Prepare accounting and payroll information.
- Administer the Personnel, Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Programs, and other R1 policies.
- Participate in planning-related organizations, such as the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), American Planning Association (APA), American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and other organizations that enhance the planning process.

- Attend, participate in, or present at transportation-related conferences, training sessions and meetings at the local, regional, state, and national levels for professional development and to enhance implementation of activities listed in this UPWP and the MPO planning processes.

Products: Billing, invoicing, and purchasing documentation; annual performance and expenditure report; and documentation for audit and informational purposes.

Task 1.2 Unified Planning Work Program Development

Objective: Region 1 Planning Council staff will develop, monitor, and coordinate the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to ensure that the region's transportation and metropolitan planning needs and priorities are identified and addressed. Region 1 Planning Council will also develop amendments to the UPWP that address new issues or requirements, new planning needs, efforts by partners, and enhance implementation of tasks.

Activities:

- Maintain the 2026 UPWP, reflecting current plans, programs, and regional priorities.
- Track implementation of the 2026 UPWP.
- Complete all the grant reporting and grant management tasks required to remain compliant or IDOT, FHWA, and FTA.
- Develop and adopt the FY 2027 UPWP, per schedule determined by staff in coordination with other transportation partnering agencies, including IDOT.
- Weekly department meetings to monitor progress of activities identified in the UPWP.

Products: FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program amendments; draft FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program; and progress reports to IDOT/FHWA.

Task 1.3 Public Involvement & Communications

Objective: Region 1 Planning Council will conduct open, continuous, and participatory meetings with the public and other stakeholders pertaining to transportation planning. The purpose of this task is to involve and educate the public about all aspects and phases of transportation planning with a focus on early and continuous gathering of information from the public in order to facilitate optimal transportation decision making.

Activities:

- Ensure an open planning process that support early and continued public involvement, timely public notices, and full public access to information regarding key transportation decisions.
- Support public outreach activities, and provide administrative support for public meetings including public legal notices, press releases, and advertisements, public meeting arrangements, and education materials for distribution at meetings.
- Host in-person and hybrid meetings for the Technical and Policy Committees, and other subcommittees, providing live streaming when required or appropriate.
- Utilize online engagement tools/platforms/software, including surveys and/or polling, for various projects within the region to increase citizen participation.
- Publish regular newsletters containing current information on transportation projects, studies, and other R1 activities.
- Create graphics and other visualizations to deliver information to interested parties through digital media communications, including websites, social media, video and audio technologies, and photography.
- Develop partnerships with community organizations to provide information on regional transportation issues, projects, and studies.
- Conduct specific outreach to traditionally underserved, hard to reach communities.
- Review and update the Public Participation Plan, as needed, including conducting public outreach to gather input and feedback from stakeholders, partners, and the general public.

Products: Updated Public Participation Plan; committee meeting materials (e.g. agendas, notices, minutes); public engagement materials (e.g., notices, visuals, presentations, etc.); and educational and outreach materials; digital media communications (e.g. websites, webinars, social media, and newsletters).



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Task 1.4 Youth Engaged in Planning (YEP!)

Objective: The objective of the YEP program is to provide primary and secondary school age children on education in transportation trends and topics and key urban planning issues facing the region.

Activities:

- Communicate with school district staff, regarding classroom visits, presentations, and participation in career fairs.
- Conduct classroom visits, including the development of agendas, presentations, and activity materials.
- Participate in various job fairs, sponsored by school districts, community colleges, and universities.
- Host walking tours with high school students to supplement classroom presentations and activities.

Products: Presentations, fact sheets and other materials.

Work Element #2. Data Development & Management

Task 2.1 GIS Support & Data Collection

Objective: Work in this task involves the gathering, maintaining, monitoring, and forecasting of a wide variety of data and information needed for a comprehensive transportation planning process. It also encompasses work associated with developing and maintaining geospatial data for specific projects to assist in various analyses.

Activities:

- Track census data including demographics, socioeconomic characteristics and analyze changes in characteristics.
- Support efforts to identify, acquire, and update data sets pertaining to transportation, environment, land use, safety, socio-economic trends and conditions, and health from various external sources
- Analyze relationship between demographics, socioeconomic characteristics and travel patterns, and clearly identify the characteristics of communities of concern.
- Support long-range transportation planning by assembling and analyzing land-use, demographic, and economic data.
- Focus on monitoring and analyzing changes in regional land use, including the development of methods

for utilizing local data from member jurisdictions in support of planning IJJA.

- Support regional and subregional geographic information system (GIS) mapping and data distribution for community and transportation planners, ensuring data consistency and relevance across various scales.
- Use geospatial software to effectively visualize and analyze trends and conditions that influence transportation systems or travel demand.
- Create and provide data, maps, and program/project information as needed, ensuring accessibility and utility for various planning needs.

Products: Expanded and updated data files; maps and other visualizations; geodatabase and network files; and ArcGIS online applications.

Task 2.2 Travel Demand & Economic Modeling

Objective: Under this task, staff will continue to develop, enhance, and maintain R1's transportation and economic models in support of transportation planning activities within the Rockford MPA. The models encompass regional travel demand models, transportation data analysis tools, and other relevant methods. Staff will also provide travel demand modeling support for transportation planning activities conducted by local public agencies.

Activities:

- Update the regional travel demand model incorporating updated modeling practices and theories, and new travel survey data. Consultant services will be utilized to assist in travel demand model (TDM) development. The services include:
 - Update the Travel Demand Model platform.
 - Provide model support with the processing and implementation of the travel data collected through various surveys and other means for the enhancement of the regional travel demand and forecasting models.
- Build internal capacity and skills for operating the updated regional travel demand model and its procedures.
- Provide support and prepare travel demand forecasts for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
- Provide technical and analytical support to regional transportation agencies, local governments, and their consultants in support of regional transportation planning activities and studies.

- Develop land-use, population, and employment forecasting scenarios to support the travel demand modeling system and other planning activities.

Products: Updated TDM; working papers and memorandums, with traffic forecasts, maps and other visualizations; and travel model files.

Work Element #3. Long Range Planning

Task 3.1 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Objective: As the designated MPO for the region, R1 is responsible for developing and maintaining a long-range transportation plan that establishes goals and objectives, articulates priority areas of investment, and coordinates local and state efforts to improve the performance of the regional transportation system. This task ensures that the region's transportation investments are linked to the 2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Activities:

- Continue work to implement the planning-related recommendations in the 2050+ MTP, including leading or assisting in other special studies and assistance to local municipalities with their planning initiatives.
- Amend the 2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), as necessary, by monitoring changes to planning and project assumptions.
- Continue tracking and analyzing performance measures associated with MTP goals.
- Develop a Transportation Equity Assessment Report for the Rockford Region.
- Conduct planning to support strategies identified in an transportation planning report and to address transportation issues that disparately affect communities.
- Serve as a resource for planning partners in meeting Title VI, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Products: 2050+ MTP modifications and amendments, as needed, and Transportation Equity Assessment Report.

Task 3.2 Performance Management

Objective: Under this task, the MPO sets targets for the performance of the transportation system. With the targets set, staff will monitor the conditions, report on the progress of achieving targets, and adjust targets, as needed. The federal performance measures include safety,

the asset management of pavement, bridges, and public transportation; personal and freight travel reliability; congestion; and public transportation safety.

Activities:

- Gather and analyze data, determine trends, and develop performance measure targets across all the required federal performance areas.
- Coordinate with IDOT, local governments, and providers of public transportation to collect data for evaluating and setting regional target values.
- Update federal performance measure targets for safety (PM1), pavement and bridge condition (PM2), system performance (PM3), transit asset management (TAM), and public transportation safety (PTASP).
- Updated system performance reports to be included in the TIP and MTP.
- Develop performance measures webpage and scorecards for performance measures identified in the MTP.

Products: Analysis of performance measure data and coordination with IDOT and transit providers.

- Identify strategies and funding to implement the Mobility Hubs Feasibility Study.
- Provide planning and technical support for implementation of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) best practices in the region.
- Provide technical support for regional and local applications for Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).

Products: Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan modifications and amendments, as needed; updated online bikeways map and associated GIS layers; and SRTS and ITEP letters of support and/or applications.



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Task 3.3 Active Transportation Planning

Objective: The intent of this task is to improve local and regional active transportation network through continued planning efforts and the implementation of the currently adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Activities:

- Continue to implement the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan by following the recommendations outlined in the plan, providing assistance to local public agencies as needed including data collection and analysis, and providing recommendations on best practices.
- Work with local public agencies to ensure that appropriate bikeway connections and extensions and on road facilities are incorporated into corridor and development plans.
- Maintain the web-based bikeways mapping tool.
- Participate in events to promote bicycling and walking as a viable and safe mode of transportation.
- Integrate a public health component into transportation planning and project prioritization, emphasizing the benefits of using alternative modes of travel and personal active transportation to reduce the growing incidence of illnesses tied to an inactive lifestyle and pollution.

Task 3.4 Freight Planning

Objective: This task is intended to maximize the Rockford Region's position in the global economy by promoting cooperation within the local freight communities and implementing regional strategies from the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), in accordance with state and federal guidance. This task will allow staff to continue work efforts related to the Rail-Served Industrial Park Feasibility Study and pursue other studies that improve considerations of the economic and transportation impacts of freight and aviation.

Activities:

- Identify and explore major trends and issues facing the region's freight system.
- Support state level planning efforts, such as freight parking and other efforts such as the Illinois Freight Advisory Committee meetings and other state-level efforts as needed.
- Monitor and update the Critical Urban Freight Corridors and work with partners to identify deficiencies on the network and potential projects.
- Continue to provide support in the development of the Rail-Served Industrial Park.

Products: Meeting attendance/coordination; working papers/reports.

Task 3.5 Regional Transportation Initiatives

The most recent iteration of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan proactively identifies the region's transportation planning needs and priorities for current and future issues. Regional transportation planning initiatives focus on special studies and plans designed to present information on a specific topic that was noted in MTP or identified as an emerging opportunity. These documents can take form as program or modal plans, feasibility or case studies, research papers, or corridor studies. In the next fiscal year, the MPO will pursue the following initiatives:

Subtask 3.5.a EV Readiness Plan

Objective: The intent of this subtask is to update and implement the Electric Vehicle (EV) Readiness Plan, by providing support for public and private market sector partners in implementing policies and strategies from the plan, and monitoring the transition to EVs in the Rockford Region.

Activities:

- Complete an update to the EV Readiness Plan.
- Develop program materials to support future electric vehicle charging efforts including the development of program standards and guidance.
- Work with regional governmental stakeholders to develop model "EV-Ready" building codes for residential and commercial construction.
- Apply for federal and state funding programs for EV charging equipment and installation.

Products: Updated EV Readiness Plan; EV program standards and guidance materials; and grant applications

Subtask 3.5.b Resilience Improvement Plan

Objective: This subtask coordinates resiliency efforts to improve reliability and security of the transportation system to withstand threats from natural and man-made disasters. A region-wide plan will be developed to address immediate and long-range planning activities and investments related to resilience, demonstrate a systemic approach, and include risk-based assessment of vulnerabilities to current and future weather events and natural disasters.

Activities:

- Develop a region-wide resilience improvement plan, with performance measures and potential pilot opportunities.

- Identifying areas within the transportation network that are most vulnerable to hazards.
- Convene and facilitate a Resilience Subgroup of the Community Advisory Forum to guide the Resiliency Improvement Plan development process.
- Publish a community survey, open to the public, to gather broad input on climate change and transportation-related issues.
- Provide assistance to local public agencies (LPAs) for Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Discretionary Grant applications.

Products: Resilience Improvement Plan; meeting attendance/coordination; and Grant applications.

Subtask 3.5.c Emerging Technology Study

Objective: With the substantial and rapid technology advances in the transportation sector, the Rockford Region must begin to prepare the region's transportation infrastructure to effectively accommodate and leverage these emerging technologies. This subtask includes activities to examine current, anticipated, and potential trends relating to various new and developing transportation technologies in order to identify potential challenges and opportunities. These technologies include, but are not limited to, autonomous vehicles, connected vehicle technologies, artificial intelligence tools, and transportation network companies.

Activities:

- Conduct research and analysis of emerging technologies related to the planning, implementation, and adoption.
- Review and monitor emerging transportation technologies, including technology development, deployment trends, potential impacts, peer activities, and industry actions and trends.
- Develop a regional emerging technology study or policy document to address planning and infrastructure needs for the region to ensure the safe and efficient operation of public roadways.
- Liaise with public and private stakeholders on autonomous and connected vehicles, implementation and deployment, and other emerging transportation technologies.
- Maintain and update regional intelligent transportation system (ITS) architecture and strategic plan for the Rockford Region, and coordinate with IDOT on statewide ITS planning.

Products: Emerging technology study or policy document and meeting attendance/coordination.

Subtask 3.5.d Green Streets Plan

Objective: Under this subtask, R1 will develop its first Green Streets Plan, which aims to transform the region's streets and sidewalks into green, resilient spaces. The plan seeks to do so by integrating stormwater management features like permeable pavements, vegetative curb extensions, rain gardens, and sidewalk trees.

Activities:

- Draft and adopt a region-wide green streets plan and/or policy.
- Gather a diverse group of stakeholders and community members for a visioning activity focused on designing their ideal streets and surrounding areas.
- Conduct a public survey to evaluate and rank green streets elements, based on factors like visual appeal, perceived functionality, and how well they align with the community's character.
- Hold discussions with key stakeholders, including local government officials, planners, public works representatives, and community members to facilitate an in-depth exchange of ideas on the design and implementation of sustainable street infrastructure.
- Create an illustrated, educational video outlining the components of a Green Street.

Products: Green Streets Plan; meeting attendance/coordination; public survey; and educational video.

Subtask 3.5.e Food Access & Transportation Report

Objective: Enhancing transportation access is crucial for addressing food insecurity and combating food deserts, ensuring that underserved residents can access fresh produce and essential groceries. Under this task, R1 will develop a report on current transportation options and their effectiveness in providing access to food sources. It will also provide recommendations for enhancing connectivity, including proposed mobile market routes and operational plans.

Activities:

- Draft a report on the relationship between food access and transportation in the Rockford Region.
- Map food deserts, existing transportation routes, and potential mobile market routes.
- Collect data on public transit and active transportation usage for grocery shopping

- Host community engagement sessions to gather input on transportation needs and preferences.
- Conduct community surveys to assess interest in mobile markets and transportation incentives.

Products: Food Access & Transportation Report; meeting attendance/coordination; and public survey.

Work Element #4. Short-Range Programming

Task 4.1 Transportation Improvement Program

Objective: Under this task, R1 prepares, amends, and documents a four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which lists and sets priorities for transportation investments over the next four fiscal years (FY) and assures projects are financially feasible, as well as coordinated with other improvements and developments.

Activities:

- Maintain the FY 2026-2029 TIP by making amendments and modifications as needed, including updates to the interactive TIP maps.
- Develop the FY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program.
- Publish the annual listing of projects for which federal funds have been obligated during the previous fiscal year.
- Review proposed projects by IDOT, local public agencies, and RMTD for transportation and Title VI impacts and consistency with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- Participate in all necessary trainings for e-TIP.
- Convert TIP database to e-TIP platform.

Products: Final FY 2026-2029 TIP; draft FY 2027-2030 TIP; annual Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process Self-Certification; FY 2026-2029 TIP amendments and modifications; annual listing of obligated projects; and e-TIP database.

Task 4.2 Funds Management

Objective: The Rockford Urbanized Area receives an annual allocation of federal formula funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for various capital programs. These programs provide funding for regional transportation projects and initiatives as determined by the Policy Committee. This task administers and monitors these programs to ensure that projects are solicited, evaluated,

programmed, and implemented consistent with the regional policies and priorities.

Activities:

- Administer the annual allocation of federal funding and to ensure that projects are solicited, evaluated, programmed, and implemented consistent with regional policy and priorities.
- Analyze projects submitted in the project selection process and evaluate them for consistency with the regional transportation plan.
- Conduct meetings and workshops for the local project sponsors to advise them on the project selection requirements.
- Monitor projects that are programmed in the TIP to ensure proper funding and priorities are being met, and ensure successful project delivery.

Products: Annual call for projects; meeting coordination; memorandum of project evaluation; and TIP amendment.

Task 4.3 Transit Network and Rail

Objective: This task supports the development of and participation in transit planning studies. Work includes evaluating proposed services or facilities, analyzing regional and corridor-level transit access, studying first- and last-mile connectivity with transit, and examining the relationship between land use and transit for specific sites or corridors. It also includes examining future transit network components including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors and intercity rail.

Activities:

- Complete an update to the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.
- Program FTA Section 5310 projects in coordination with Illinois Department of Transportation and Rockford Mass Transit District.
- Continue to work with the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) Committee to coordinate transportation needs in the region.
- Provided planning and technical support to transit and paratransit providers.
- Collect and maintain transit data (ridership, service network) to support regional planning efforts.
- Maintain the regional transit network map.
- Continue to provide data and other support to complete planning efforts for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects along an east-west corridor and a north-south corridor.

- Support implementation of passenger rail service to/from the Rockford Region.
- Conduct research and share resources designed to support transit-oriented development (TOD) to improve first- and last-mile connections, and economic potential of rail and transit station areas.

Products: Coordinated Transit--Human Services Transportation Plan; meeting attendance/coordination; expanded and updated data files; maps and other visualizations; and working papers.

Task 4.4 Infrastructure Priorities

Objective: Under this task, R1, in coordination with the Northern Illinois Council of Governments (NorthCOG), will produce an Infrastructure Priorities Report. This report is an annual list of priority infrastructure projects shared with state and federal legislators at the beginning of the new legislative session.

Activities:

- Solicit infrastructure priority project applications.
- Analyze projects submitted in the project selection process and evaluate them for consistency with the regional transportation and economic development plans.
- Develop the 2026 Infrastructure Priorities Report.
- Publish and distribute the Infrastructure Priorities Report to elected officials, legislative advocates, and members of the public.

Products: Annual call for projects and 2026 Infrastructure Priorities Report.



Image Source: GoRockford

Work Element #5. Special Planning Projects

Task 5.1 Safety Planning

Objective: This task supports the goals of the 2050+ MTP, Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan, and the USDOT's and IDOT's Strategic Highway Safety Plans. It seeks to improve the safety of the region's transportation system, while maintaining acceptable levels of accessibility and efficiency.

Activities:

- Support and encourage the development, implementation, and promotion of proven safety countermeasures and other Safe System Approach strategies that align with the Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan.
- Assist with local road traffic safety action plan projects.
- Provide technical assistance to LPAs for Safe Streets for All (SS4A) and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) applications.
- Create and provide educational/informational materials, as needed, including managing and posting education material to social media accounts.
- Participate in statewide transportation safety initiatives for Illinois.

Products: Meeting attendance/coordination; expanded and updated data files; maps and other visualizations; and working papers.

Task 5.2 Congestion Management & Operations Planning

Objective: The overarching goal of this task is to further strengthen linkages between operations and planning to solve operational problems, improve system performance, strengthen communication across transportation agencies, and reduce congestion.

Activities:

- Revise the Congestion Mitigation Process (CMP) documentation to better align with regional goals and priorities in the 2050+ MTP.
- Monitor and implement the Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) Plan.
- Work with IDOT and local partners to coordinate and collaborate on TSMO initiatives, such as traffic signal coordination and travel demand management.

Products: Congestion Mitigation Process (CMP) documentation.

Task 5.3 Corridor, Project-Level, and Special Studies

Objective: Under this task, staff ensures intergovernmental coordination amongst regional entities, provides technical support on corridor steering committees, and conducts other research and technical assistance activities on transportation-related projects conducted by LPAs. Special short-term studies are also included under this task.

Activities:

- Coordinate with and provide technical assistance to state and local agencies on transportation planning issues, studies, and initiatives.
- Serve on project steering committees, as requested, and attend stakeholder workshops and public hearings for transportation projects occurring in the region.

Products: Meeting attendance/coordination; maps and other visualizations; and working papers/reports.

Task 5.4 Environmental Planning

Objective: This task focuses on the development and implementation of strategies that maintain healthy ecological systems, improve water quality, protect open space and natural areas, mitigate risks posed by natural hazards, reduce pollution, promote and incorporate environmental stewardship principles into transportation investments.

Activities:

- Continue to monitor status of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and greenhouse gas emissions requirements, climate change and resilience, stormwater management, and their impact on the transportation system.
- Collaborate with partner agencies on transportation-related air and water quality initiatives, programs, and requirements.
- Further development of a regional carbon reduction strategy, as identified in the IJJA.
- Update the Greenways Plan and Map for the three-county region.
- Incorporate environmental screenings of transportation projects in MPO planning documents and programs.

Products: Updated Greenways Plan; meeting attendance/coordination; and working papers/reports.

Task 5.5 Housing Coordination

Objective: The task will include coordination activities with local public entities to identify regional housing opportunities that align with existing and proposed development.

Activities:

- Complete a Housing Coordination Plan for the Rockford Region.
- Continue to support regional efforts to integrate land use and transportation planning that results in development within existing neighborhoods, diverse housing and transportation options, and meaningful community engagement.
- Provide support and technical assistance to the region to increase the supply and variety of housing types available in the community.
- Review local comprehensive land use plans in regards to future residential developments and affordable housing efforts.
- Monitor residential construction, demolition, and change relating to their impact on transportation.
- Coordinate with the local housing authorities, real estate and building associations, and other organizations engaged in housing development and management.

Products: Housing Coordination Plan; housing toolkits; and meeting attendance/coordination.

Task 5.6 Livable Communities Initiative

Objective: Under this task, R1 provides technical assistance to neighborhoods and local public entities to create quality, mixed-use places and promote multi-modal transportation options through a subarea study that highlights policy and programmatic recommendations and implementation projects.

Activities:

- Manage day-to-day operations and administration of the Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) program including, but not limited to, budgets, schedules, and program reviews
- Manage planning activities for the LCI Technical Assistance program, including but not limited to the annual solicitation process, communicating with awarded entities, coordinating community outreach efforts, and conducting a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process.
- Publish an annual or biannual report on trends in study areas funded under the LCI program.
- Convene the LCI Advisory Committee.
- Facilitate communication and information sharing on the program with the LCI Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Forum, neighborhood associations, and members of the public.

Products: LCI subarea study; annual call for projects; and meeting attendance/coordination.

Table 2-1: Summary of Work Projects

UWP-Funded Work Products

Federally-Required	Status	Work Element	Anticipated Completion
2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Congestion Management Process	Monitoring	WE #5	Ongoing
Annual Listing of Obligated Projects (FY 2025)	Commencing	WE #4	FY 2026
Human Service Transportation Plan	Monitoring	WE #4	FY2026
Performance Measure Targets	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Public Participation Plan	Monitoring	WE #1	Ongoing
Title Vi (2025-2028)	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Transportation Improvement Program (FY2026-2029)	Monitoring	WE #4	Ongoing
Transportation Improvement Program (FY 2027-2030)	Development	WE #4	Ongoing
Unified Work Program (FY2026)	Monitoring	WE #1	Ongoing

Other Work Products	Status	Work Element	Anticipated Completion
Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study	Continuing	WE #4	FY 2026

Table 2-1: Summary of Work Projects Cont.**UWP-Funded Work Products Contd.**

Other Work Products	Status	Work Element	Anticipated Completion
Carbon Reduction Strategy	Continuing	WE #5	TBD
Complete Streets Policy & Standards	Monitoring	WE #5	Ongoing
Connected & Autonomous Vehicle Readiness Study	Deferred	WE #5	TBD
Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Freight Study for the Rockford Region	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Greenways Map and Plan	Commencing	WE #3	FY 2026
Housing and Transportation Study	Continuing	WE #5	FY 2026
Housing Coordination Study	Commencing	WE #5	FY 2026
Housing Corridor Study	Commencing	WE #5	FY 2026
Infrastructures Priorities Playbook (2026)	Commencing	WE #3	FY 2026
Livable Communities Initiative Round 1	Continuing	WE #5	FY 2026
Livable Communities Initiative Round 2	Commencing	WE #5	FY 2026
Mobility Hubs Feasibility Study	Monitoring	WE #4	Ongoing
Rail-served Industrial Park	Monitoring	WE #4	Ongoing
Resiliency Improvement Plan	Commencing	WE #3	FY 2026
RMTD Climate Action Plan	Monitoring	WE #4	Ongoing
RMTD Comprehensive Mobility Study	Monitoring	WE #4	Ongoing
Transportation Funding Guidebook	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Transportation Resiliency Study	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Transportation Safety Plan	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Transportation Systems Management & Operations	Monitoring	WE #3	Ongoing
Water Resource Plan	Commencing	WE #5	FY 2026

UWP-Funded Work Products

Study/Plan	Status	Anticipated Completion
3-County Regional Interchange Study	Complete	FY 2021
RMTD Comprehensive Mobility Study	Complete	FY 2022
Keith Creek Corridor Study	Complete	FY 2023
Freight Study for the Rockford Region	Complete	FY 2024
Passenger Rail Station Conceptual Siting Analysis	Complete	FY 2024
Regional Traffic Signal Management Program	Complete	FY 2025
Greenhouse Gas Inventory	Complete	FY 2025
Parking Reimagined	Complete	FY 2025
State of the Trails Report	Continuing	FY 2026

U.S. DOT Funded Work Products

Study/Plan	Status	Anticipated Completion
SS4A Planning Grant for the Rockford MPO	Continuing	FY 2026
SW Rail Yards Planning Project	Continuing	FY 2026

Table 2-2: Work Elements & Planning Factors**1. Management & Administration**

UPWP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.1 Program Support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2 Unified Planning Work Program	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.3 Public Involvement & Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.4 Youth Engaged in Planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

2. Data Development & Management

UPWP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.1 GIS Support & Data Collection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2 Travel Demand & Economic Modeling	X						X	X	X	

3. Long Range Planning

UPWP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3.1 Metropolitan Transportation Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.2 Performance Management	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.3 Active Transportation Planning		X		X	X	X		X		X
3.4 Freight Planning	X			X	X	X				
3.5 Regional Transportation Initiatives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

4. Short-Range Planning

UPWP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.1 Transportation Improvement Program	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.2 Funds Management	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3 Transit Network and Rail	X			X		X				X
4.4 Infrastructure Priorities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5. Special Planning Projects

UPWP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5.1 Safety Planning		X		X	X					
5.2 Congestion Mitigation & Operations	X	X		X	X		X		X	
5.3 Corridor, Project-Level, & Special Studies				X	X	X	X	X	X	
5.4 Environmental Planning				X	X			X	X	
5.5 Housing Coordination	X			X	X	X				
5.6 Livable Communities Initiative				X	X	X				

Budget Summary

The total estimated cost to implement this unified planning work program (UPWP) is \$1,493,958.83. The five work elements are developed around the federal planning marks (PL) and matching funds from the State of Illinois Metropolitan Planning Funds (SPF) and local match. Partner organizations also provide local contribution funds (LC) to address transportation and land use planning elements necessary for the region which surpass the eligibility requirements of the Federal and State sources. The funding breakout for the FY 2026 by source is provided in Figure 3-1.

Accordingly, all five transportation planning elements have highway (PL) and transit (5305(d)) aspects as well as state

planning funds and local contributions that are equally distributed. The anticipated expenditures per work element is provided in Table 3-1.

The cost allocation methodology for FY 2026 will be in accordance with Region 1 Planning Council (R1) policies and procedures and the same as used and approved in previous years. Region 1 Planning Council will submit those charges for reimbursement that can be defined as eligible costs under the terms and conditions as determined in the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the MPO and IDOT.

Figure 3-1. UWP Funding by Source, FY 2026

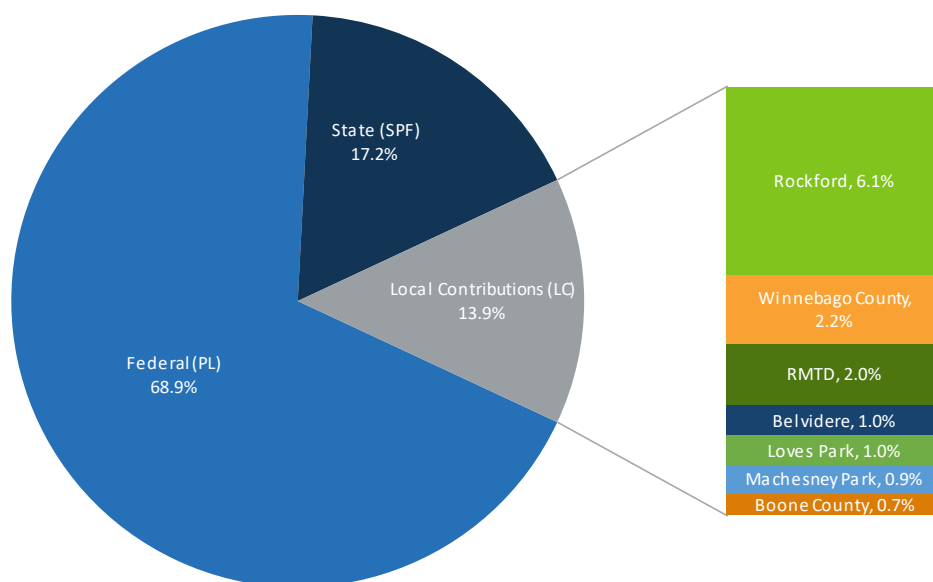


Table 3-1: Expenditures by Work Element

Work Element	Work Element	Federal Formula	Federal Provisional	State Funds	Local Contribution	Percent of Total Budget
1.0 Management & Administration	\$657,341.89	\$392,199.28	\$60,513.97	\$113,178.31	\$91,450.32	44.0%
2.0 Data Development & Management	\$134,456.29	\$80,222.58	\$12,377.86	\$23,150.11	\$18,705.75	9.0%
3.0 Long Range Planning	\$395,899.09	\$236,210.93	\$36,445.91	\$68,164.21	\$55,078.03	26.5%
4.0 Short Range Programming	\$104,577.12	\$62,395.34	\$9,627.22	\$18,005.64	\$14,548.91	7.0%
5.0 Special Planning Projects	\$201,684.44	\$120,333.87	\$18,566.79	\$34,725.16	\$28,058.62	13.5%
Total:	\$1,493,958.83	\$891,362.01	\$137,531.75	\$257,223.44	\$207,841.63	100.0%

Direct and indirect costs expended by R1 to carry out this work program fall within 19 different line item expenses, aligning with the Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA). Labor costs are specific personnel costs (salaries and wages) and fringe benefits attributed directly to the ten work elements and toward achieving the goals described in this UPWP. Non-labor cost includes rental and maintenance costs, payroll, insurance, audit, telephone, copier, postage, office supplies, travel, education and training, subscriptions, dues, advertising, and other office equipment. Table 3-2 displays the revenue and expenditures representing information in the required GATA budget template.

Table 3-2: FY 2026 Line Item Budget

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditures
Personnel (Salaries & Wages)	\$620,825.21
Fringe Benefits	\$277,889.18
Travel	\$18,050.00
Equipment	-
Supplies	\$5,750.00
Contractual Services & Subawards	\$67,033.91
Consultant (Professional Services)	\$27,669.34
Construction	-
Occupancy (Rent & Utilities)	\$49,500.00
Research and Development (R&D)	-
Telecommunications	\$1,184.40
Training and Education	\$8,000.00
Direct Administrative Costs	-
Miscellaneous Costs	\$4,000.00
Total Direct Costs	\$1,073,481.93
Total Indirect Costs	\$161,215.16
Federal & State Revenue Total	\$1,286,117.20

Salaries and benefits account for approximately 80 percent of the budget and constitutes the largest expenses for the MPO. The second largest expense, at 12.4 percent of the budget, is for contractual payments for services (contractual and consulting) performed for R1 in accordance with the terms and agreements of a written agreement. The remaining 7.6 percent of the budget is attributed to the day-to-day operations necessary to run the MPO, including, but, not limited to, office supplies, printing, rent, and training opportunities, and professional dues. This line item includes accounting, human resource, legal, and subject-matter expertise, if needed.

Appendices

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Appendix A: Glossary & Acronyms

Acronyms & Abbreviations

#

3-C: Continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive

A

AASHTO: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

AMPO: Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

APA: American Planning Association

B

BRT: Bus Rapid Transit

C

CEDS: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations

CMP: Congestion Mitigation Process

CRP: Carbon Reduction Program

D

DBE: Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

E

EEO: Equal Employment Opportunity

EV: Electric Vehicles

F

FHWA: Federal Highway Administration

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

FY: Fiscal Year

G

GATA: Grants Accountability and Transparency Act

GIS: Geographic Information System

H

HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program

HSTP: Human Service Transportation Plan

I

IDOT: Illinois Department of Transportation

IGA: Intergovernmental Agreement

IJA: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

IT: Information Technology

ITEP: Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program

ITS: Intelligent Transportation System

L

LC: Local Contributions

LCI: Livable Communities Initiative

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

LPA: Local Public Agencies

M

MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization

MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan

N

NAASQ: National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NARC: National Association of Regional Councils

P

PM1: Safety Performance Management Measures

PM2: Pavement and Bridge Condition Measures

PM3: Performance of the National Highway System, Freight, and CMAQ Measures

PL: Federal Planning Marks

PROTECT: Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation

PTASP: Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan

R

R1: Region 1 Planning Council

RMAP: Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning

RMTD: Rockford Mass Transit District

S

SPF: State Planning Funds

SPR: State Planning and Research

SRTS: Safe Routes to School

SS4A: Safe Streets for All

STBG: Surface Transportation Block Grant

T

TA: Transportation Alternatives

TAM: Transit Asset Management

TDM: Travel Demand Model

TIP: Transportation Improvement Program

TOD: Transit-Oriented Development

TMA: Transportation Management Area

TSMO: Transportation System Management & Operations

U

UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program

USC: United States Code

USDOT: United States Department of Transportation

Y

YEP: Youth Engaged in Planning

Glossary of Terms

#

3-C Process: Continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

A

Accessibility: The ease of reaching valued destinations, such as jobs, shops, schools, entertainment, and recreation.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Alternative Transportation: Any mode of personal transportation other than a single-occupant vehicle, including biking, walking, carpooling, and public transportation.

Source: MPO Alternative Transportation Committee Bylaws

Attainment Area: An area considered to have air quality that meets or exceeds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health standards used in the Clean Air Act.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Autonomous Vehicle: Also known as self-driving or driverless vehicles, are vehicles in which some aspect of control is automated by the car.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

C

Clean Air Act: The law that defines the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality and stratospheric ozone layer.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Complete Streets: A transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, and maintained to enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for all modes of travel. At the core of the complete streets philosophy is the idea that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation

Congestion Management Process (CMP): A systematic approach applied in a metropolitan region to identify congestion and its causes, propose mitigation strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program: The CMAQ program provides funds to States for transportation projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality, particularly in areas of the country that do not attain national air quality standards.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation

Connected Vehicle: A vehicle with internal devices that allow it to connect to other vehicles or with an external infrastructure system.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP): Locally developed transportation plans that identifies the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation. These plans must involve representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, as well as members of the public.

Source: Federal Transit Administration

E

Electric Vehicle (EV): A vehicle that has an electric motor instead of an internal combustion engine.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Emissions: Harmful, polluting gases that affect the Earth's atmosphere.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

G

Green House Gas: Gases that trap heat in the upper atmosphere are defined as greenhouse gases (e.g. Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide, and Fluorinated Gases).

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Green Infrastructure: Strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations.

Source: The Conservation Fund

I

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS): The application of advanced technologies to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation systems.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture: A systems framework to guide the planning and deployment of ITS infrastructure.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

L

Land Use: Land use is a term used to describe the human use of land. It represents the economic and cultural activities (e.g. agricultural, residential, industrial, mining, and recreational) that are practiced at a given area.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Livability: A livable community provides more transportation choices that are safe, reliable, and economical; promotes equitable, affordable housing options; enhances economic competitiveness; supports and targets funding toward existing communities; and values communities and neighborhoods.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

M

Megaregion: A network of metropolitan areas, connected by existing economic, social, and infrastructure relationships.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA): The geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607) must be carried out.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): A regional policy body, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, and designated by local officials and the governor of the state to carry out the metropolitan transportation requirements of federal highway and transit legislation.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): The official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): The county or counties (or equivalent entities) associated with at least one urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Mobility: The ability to move or be moved from place to place.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Multimodal: The availability of transportation options using different modes within a system or corridor.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

N

National Ambient Air Quality Standards: Regulations establishing national standards for six principal pollutants (including Carbon Monoxide (CO); Lead (Pb); Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂); Ozone (O₃); Particle Pollution (PM); and Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂)).

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National Environmental Policy Act: Regulation requiring federal agencies, and any projects using federal dollars, to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to implementation.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National Highway System (NHS): The system of highways designated and approved in accordance with the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 103b).

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Nonattainment Area: Any geographic area that has not met the requirements for clean air as set out in the Clean Air Act of 1990.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

P

Performance-Based Planning: Process that applies performance management principles to transportation system policy and investment decisions, providing a link between management and long range decisions about policies and investments that an agency makes in its transportation system.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Performance Measures: Indicators of how well the transportation system is performing with regard to such things as average speed, reliability of travel, and accident rates. Used as feedback in the decision-making process.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Programming: Prioritizing proposed projects and matching those projects with available funds to accomplish agreed upon, stated needs.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Public Participation: The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

R

REMI TranSight Model: A direct input-output model used to evaluate the total economic effects of changes to the transportation systems and the economy. Integrating economic forecasting tools with travel demand modeling, REMI demonstrates how transportation makes economies competitive.

Source: Regional Economic Model, Inc.

T

Transportation Management Area (TMA): An urbanized area with a population over 200,000 (as determined by the latest decennial census) or other area when TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO (or affect local officials), and officially designated by the Administrators of the Federal Highway Administration and the FTA.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO): Integrated strategies to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through the implementation of multimodal and intermodal, cross-jurisdictional systems, services, and projects designed to preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability of the transportation system.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

Travel Demand Model: A program or set of computer programs and data which are assembled and usually run by professionals who specialize in travel forecasting.

Source: Ohio Department of Transportation

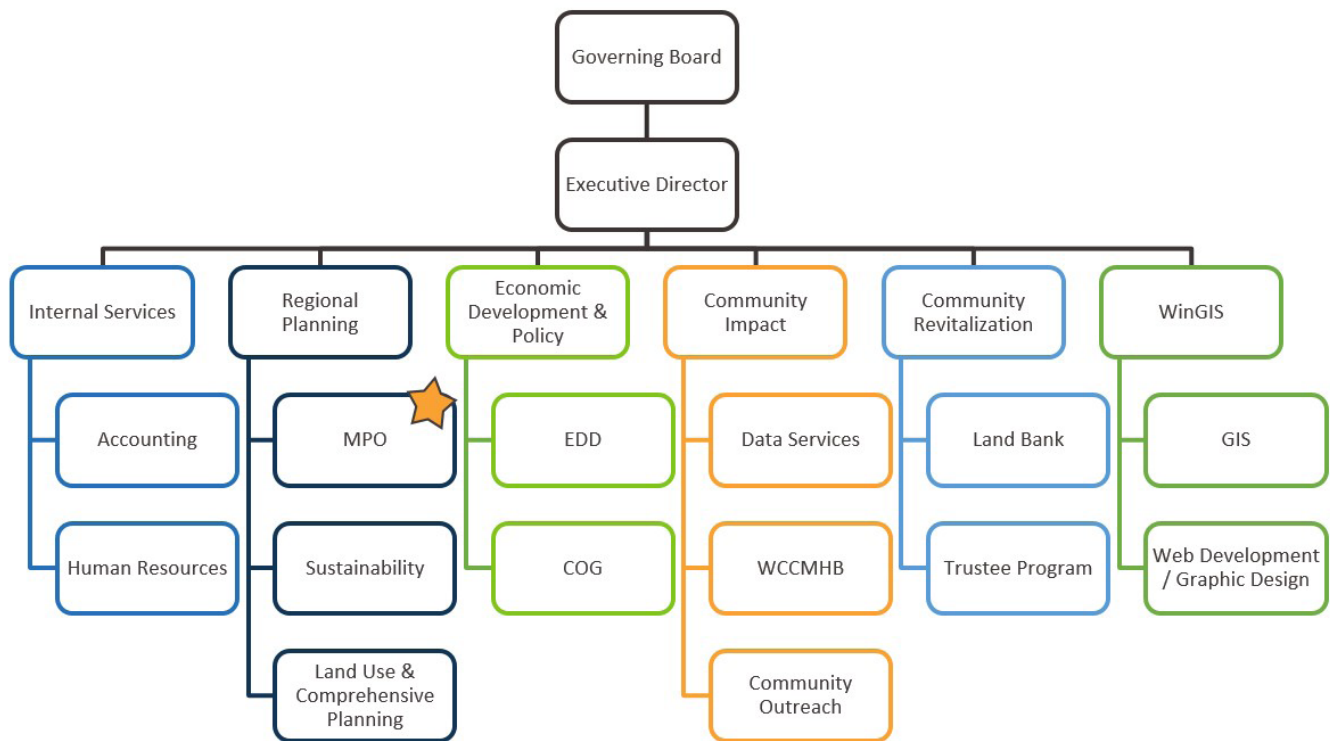
U

Urbanized Areas (UA): An area consisting of a densely developed territory that contains a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people.

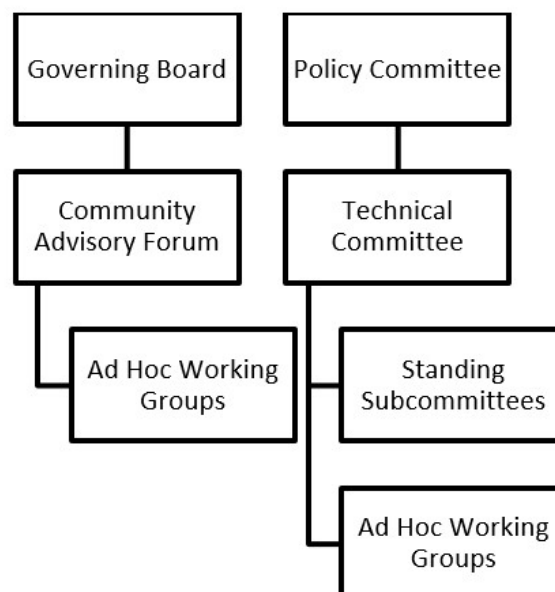
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix B: R1 Structure

Region 1 Planning Council Organizational Structure



Region 1 Planning Committee Structure



Appendix C: Public Comments & Revisions

The draft version of the FY 2026 UPWP was distributed to the Technical and Policy Committees and made available on the Region 1 Planning Council (R1) website on April 21, 2025. Public comment period for the FY 2026 UPWP was from April 21, 2025 until April 30, 2025.

Comments should be direct to:

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Listed below are changes made to the May 2, 2025 draft FY 2026 UPWP:

Appendix D: Title VI

Region 1 Planning Council (R1), acting as the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is dedicated to planning process that ensures residents are informed about and given meaningful opportunities to engage in regional planning efforts and decision making. R1 must ensure its planning reflects the varied demographics of the MPA to serve the widest range of citizens effectively. This approach will enable the implementation of strategies that utilize federal funding to benefit the entire region represented by the MPO. To accomplish this goal, the MPO has developed this Title VI Program in accordance with the federal laws, regulations, and guidance that govern its programs and activities.

The Title VI Program reflects the MPO's commitment to implementing planning processes that are designed to protect against discrimination and to ensure that it provides fairness and consideration of issues impacting disadvantaged residents. It also provides a clear process for resident to use if they feel that they have been discriminated against in one of R1's programs or activities. This program also outlines the strategies and tools that the MPO utilizes to reach and involve all of its residents.

A significant goal of the MPO is to assure that the delivery of public transportation services and the priority setting for transportation infrastructure improvements does not disproportionately distribute the benefits of these publicly funded activities away from less prominent populations. To maintain progress toward this goal, the MPO has monitored the delivery of public transportation services, the implementation of transportation improvement projects, and conducted transportation planning activities. With regard to public transit, this work was performed under specific long-standing guidance issued by the FTA and FHWA. The improvement project prioritization and MPO planning techniques involved the assessment of where work was being planned, or programmed, in comparison to the spatial demographics of the community.

The MPO examines the benefits and burdens of transportation investments using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) by overlaying current and proposed projects with datasets such as demographics, density, access to transit, and several others. The Alternative Transportation Committee also includes representatives that provide the MPO substantial input on the mobility and accessibility needs of transit dependent populations as well as the needs of elderly and disabled persons. Furthermore, a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan has been developed and is currently being implemented to assist those persons with language barriers.

The FTA and FHWA have issued guidance for the Title VI planning documents. The requirements have been set with the release of FTA Circular 4702.1B (Title VI/ effective October 1, 2012) and FTA Circular 4703.1 (Environmental Justice/ effective August 15, 2012). Requirements are reflected for both the MPO and RMTD through the updated Title VI documents for each respective organization. The MPO will continue to monitor the expenditure of Federal and State funds relating to transportation improvements as they correlate to geographic locations of less prominent populations within the Metropolitan Planning Area.

Prior to the development and adoption of the 2022 MPO Title VI document and at the request of the FHWA and FTA, the MPO provided status update letters regarding the current state of the Title VI document for both the MPO and the RMTD. These letters described the current state of the Title VI analysis process, annual self-certification process, and status of each agencies compliance as a result of recent FTA Triennial reviews (RMTD) and joint FHWA/FTA Federal Certification reviews (MPO). Both RMTD and the MPO were found to be in compliance with regulations pertaining to Title VI as there were no findings or corrective actions issued for either agency. Below is a listing of the updates that were submitted to both FHWA and FTA.

1. The report entitled, "Title VI & Environmental Justice of the Public Transit Services provided by the Rockford Mass Transit District in the Rockford Urbanized Area", March 2004, as prepared by RATS.
2. The letter dated March 29, 2007, regarding "Title VI and Environmental Justice Assessment for the Rockford Mass Transit District" addressed to Dwight B. Sinks, Civil Rights Officer, US DOT / Federal Transit Administration / Region V, from Gary McIntyre (MPO)
3. The letter dated March 27, 2008, regarding "Title VI and Environmental Justice Update for the Rockford Mass Transit District Reporting Requirements", addressed to Dwight B. Sinks, Civil Rights Officer, US DOT /Federal Transit Administration / Region V, from Jon Paul Diipla (MPO)
4. The letter dated June 20, 2011, regarding "Title VI and Environmental Justice for the Rockford Mass Transit District Status Report", addressed to Donald Allen, Civil Rights Officer, US DOT / Federal Transit Administration / Region V, from Jon Paul Diipla (MPO)
5. The letter dated June 20, 2011, regarding "Title VI and Environmental Justice for the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning Status Report", addressed to John

Donovan, Metropolitan Planning Specialist, US DOT / Federal Highway Administration, from Jon Paul Diipla (MPO)

6. The report entitled, “Title VI Program and Environmental Justice Assessment 2014-2017” provided by the Rockford Mass Transit District in the Rockford Urbanized Area, March 2014, as prepared by RMAP.
7. The report entitled, “Title VI & Environmental Justice Considerations”, September 24th, 2015, as prepared by the MPO.
8. The report entitled, “Title VI Program and Environmental Justice Assessment 2018-2020” provided by the Rockford Mass Transit District in the Rockford Urbanized Area, June 2017, as prepared by the MPO.
9. The report entitled, “Title VI & Environmental Justice Considerations for the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization”, February 28, 2019, as prepared by the MPO.
10. The report entitled, “Title VI Program and Environmental Justice Assessment 2021-2023” provided by the Rockford Mass Transit District in the Rockford Urbanized Area, September 29, 2020, as prepared by the MPO.
11. The report entitled, “Title VI & Environmental Justice Considerations for the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization”, June 23, 2022, as prepared by the MPO.
12. The report entitled, “Title VI Program and Environmental Justice Assessment 2024-2026” provided by the Rockford Mass Transit District in the Rockford Urbanized Area, July 2023, as prepared by the MPO.



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS

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