



2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan

**Technical Report #4
Public & Stakeholder Involvement**

**Final Report
January 2026**

2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Technical Report #4 Public & Stakeholder Involvement

Final Report 1.20.2026

This document has been prepared by 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

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



AN ENGINE FOR COLLABORATION IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS

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Introduction

Transportation decisions impact every aspect of day-to-day life for those who live, work, and travel within a region. It can also play a significant role in the economic well-being of a region. Due to the role transportation plays in a region, meaningful public involvement is needed early and continuously throughout the planning process. Public involvement, used interchangeably with public participation and public engagement, is an integral part of the transportation process that helps ensure decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences.ⁱ Public engagement is important because it allows planners to identify issues and opportunities early in the planning process, ensures decisions will have minimal negative consequences, builds trust between the community and transportation professionals, increases the likelihood of public acceptance of a project, and can create more effective solutions.

For the development of the 2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), it was important for Region 1 Planning Council (R1), serving as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Region, to reach out to all those who work or live in the region and engage them in meaningful dialogue about their transportation needs and priorities, the transportation planning process, and potential impacts from transportation to their community.

The following report documents how R1 conducted public engagement as a part of the 2050+ Metropolitan Transportation Plan planning process. The report is divided into four sections, including this introduction. The introduction defines the role of meaningful public involvement in the transportation planning process and provides the legal framework guiding public participation. Second, the report provides an overview of the public engagement strategy developed for the MTP's planning process, including definitions of the techniques and tools utilized, as well as the committees consulted. The third section documents each of the rounds of public engagement undertaken. Finally, the technical report concludes with copies of public engagement materials and results.

Public Participation in the Planning Process

Since transportation planning defines a region's vision for the future, it needs to be conducted in a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative manner, known as the 3-C planning process. Dating back to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, this process is designed to engage the public and stakeholders in establishing a shared vision and goals for the community. This planning process includes: a comprehensive consideration of possible strategies; an evaluation process that encompasses diverse viewpoints; the collaborative participation of relevant transportation-related agencies and organizations; and open, timely, and meaningful public involvement.ⁱⁱ

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) defines meaningful public involvement as "a process that proactively seeks full representation from the community, considers public comments and feedback, and incorporates that feedback into a project, program, or plan when possible."ⁱⁱⁱ Public involvement cannot be accomplished in a one-size-fits-all approach. Public involvement strategies need to include a combination of techniques and channels, such as in-person, digital, virtual, and print tools, to reach the widest breadth of the public as possible. Planners also need to be cognizant of the barriers to meaningful involvement when employing strategies, such as language and accessibility. For example, publishing materials in the languages spoken by the community and hosting meetings at locations near public transportation stops can address barriers to participation.

Public involvement for the Rockford MPO is guided by the most recent iteration of the Public Participation Plan (PPP), adopted in 2022. The PPP is a federally-required document that defines the process for providing the public, stakeholders, and interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. It sets forth the policies, procedures, and methods utilized for involving the general public and area transportation stakeholders in the transportation planning and programming activities conducted within the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

Per the PPP, when determining the appropriate level and methods of involvement for a plan, program, or project, the MPO will employ the following process:

1. Define what the purpose of the project is. *The purpose of this project is...*
2. List and describe what deliverables or the desired outcomes of the project are. The anticipated deliverables or outcomes of the plan will inform following steps below. *This project will result in...*
3. Describe the purpose of public engagement for the project. This question will inform the expected level(s) of participation: Inform, consult, involve, or collaborate. *The purpose of public engagement for this project is to...*
4. Identify which members of the public or stakeholders who should be engaged. *Members of the public who should be engaged are...*
5. Identify the strategies that can be used to engage the public, such as the outreach methods and techniques described in the PPP.
6. Describe how success of the public engagement will be measured. *The public engagement will be successful if...*
7. Define how to measure the success of the project. *The project will be successful if...*

- Representatives of users of public transportation,
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities,
- Representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and
- Other interested parties.

Legal Framework

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316, MPOs are required to afford the public a reasonable opportunity to participate in the development of and comment on transportation plans, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Under federal guidance, MPOs need to conduct public meetings at convenient and accessible locations at convenient times, employ visualization techniques to describe plans, and make public information available in an electronically accessible format and means. They should also, to the best of their ability, engage interested parties, as outlined in 23 CFR 450.316. Interested parties that must be included by the MPO in the creation of planning documents are:

- Individuals,
- Affected public agencies,
- Representatives of public transportation employees,
- Public ports,
- Freight shippers,
- Private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program),

The Engagement Strategy

Transportation is essential to all aspects of life; therefore, transportation planning cannot be conducted in a silo. Concerted effort must be made to ensure transportation plans align with regional economic development and workforce strategies, environmental protection and conservation efforts, and climate action goals.

In 2022, Region 1 Planning Council (R1), serving as the region's federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Economic Development District (EDD), merged the planning processes of its three core planning documents: the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MPA), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and the Climate Action Plan (CAP). Each of these plans are distinct, standalone documents serving a unique purpose, yet they share common themes, goals, and strategies. Thus, developing these core planning documents in unison creates a more efficient planning process while ensuring that regional transportation, economic development, and climate action plans are aligned. For this reason, the development of the MTP was closely tied to that of the CEDS and CAP, including a shared engagement strategy.

The shared engagement strategy utilized for these plans are detailed below. However, this technical report specifically focuses on the components most pertinent to the MTP, which has the most stringent public engagement requirements.

Rounds of Engagement

Development of the plan was a multi-year process beginning in 2021. Due to the nature of the MTP and its potential impact on the region, it was essential that the public and stakeholders were included throughout the development. As a result, R1 implemented a public outreach strategy that would involve three rounds of engagement extending over three years:

- **Round One:** Needs & Opportunities
- **Round Two:** Strategic Direction; and
- **Round Three:** Public Comment Period.

The first two rounds of the public engagement process were designed to both educate interested parties on the current conditions of the transportation system and gather input that would be needed in the development of the plan. The final round of the public engagement focused on presenting and gathering feedback on the draft document. Stretching public engagement over multiple years allowed R1 to engage a broad spectrum of residents, businesses, civic and

community groups, elected officials, and technical staff from the region's local public agencies (LPAs). The final round was used to receive written and oral comments on the draft plan.

In between the official rounds of public engagement, additional outreach efforts took place to inform the public and stakeholders on the progress of the planning process. These efforts included briefing the Metropolitan Planning Organization's various committees, as well as presenting to local organizations, such as Goodwill Industries and the Rockford section of the American Society of Quality (ASQ).

Figure 2-1: Engagement Strategy Process



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Techniques & Tools

No one-size-fits-all method exists for community engagement, especially when trying to reach a broad audience. Numerous techniques and tools can be used for informing the public, as well as for gathering input during the planning process. The decision to use a specific technique or tool is based on several factors, including targeted audience, audience size, time available, cost, and purpose of the engagement. For example, some techniques and tools are better suited for informing the public on information related to a particular project or topic, such as social media, while others are better for gathering input, such as focus groups and surveys.

Over the three-year planning process, a number of techniques and tools were used to both inform the public and gather input. Selecting the most appropriate engagement techniques was given great consideration. These techniques and tools are defined in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Public Engagement Techniques and Tools Utilized**Techniques**

Technique	Definition	Level of Participation
Briefings	Issue-focused meetings between organization representatives and a small group, in which a new program is introduced or project updates are provided to groups already familiar with an existing project.	Consult, Collaborate
Key Person Interviews	One-on-one conversations about a specific topic or issue with an individual recognized or designated as a community leader or representing an organization with an interest in the project or program.	Consult
Non-Traditional Events	A non-traditional event may be a site visit, project area tour, or table or booth at larger events or specific locations, such as libraries, markets, and bus stops.	Inform, Consult
Partner-Hosted Meetings	A community organization's or group's meeting in which an organization is invited to introduce a new program or provide project updates.	Inform
Open Houses	Used to share information, provide a setting for public discussion, and gather feedback from community members. They can be held in-person, online, or both.	Connect, Inform, Consult
Workshops	Typically small group gatherings that are designed to solicit specific input on projects, plans, or programs.	Inform, Consult

Tools

Tool	Definition	Level of Participation
Games & Activities	Unique ways to encourage participation by giving people accessible activities that help them learn about a program or project.	Consult
Media Outreach	Informs community members about projects and programs using advertising, media relations, and social media outlets.	Inform
Public Information Materials	Provide basic reader-friendly information about a process, project, or program and are typically used to inform, announce, and notify an audience, such as a newsletter, poster, and fact sheet.	Inform
Survey	Used to assess widespread public opinion in a quantitative (numeric) format on either a specific topic or broad ideas.	Consult
Voting & Polling	Voting and polling activities use print or online tools to ask the public and stakeholders to express a preference for an issue or idea and have their preferences recorded, usually anonymously and instantaneously.	Consult
Website	A digital home base for an organization's project, program, or plan. It is a central information hub where all project information is kept for instant viewing.	Inform, Consult

Source: Federal Highway Administration

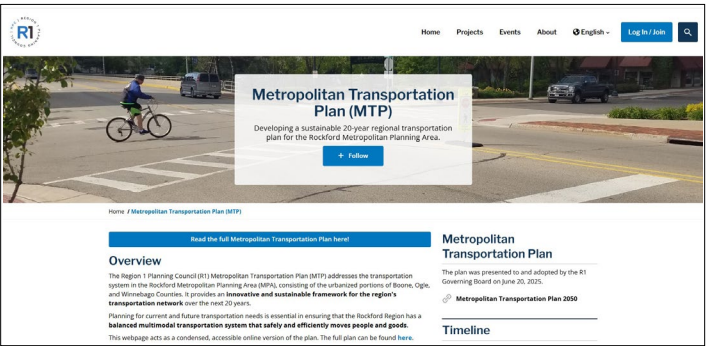
Engage R1

In December 2023, R1 launched an online engagement platform. This online engagement platform is utilized to inform the public about active and past projects, as well as to conduct and analyze public input on said projects. To collect input from the public, the site offers a variety of activities for individuals to participate in. This ensures planning efforts underway reflect the public’s thoughts and needs. This platform offers an additional way to reach the public and does not replace in-person outreach events.

This tool increases accessibility for the public so that time, transportation, physical ability, language, or any other barrier does not interfere with participation. It is accessible from any location, any time of day. It can be translated into eight languages most commonly spoken in the northern Illinois region: English, Arabic, Spanish, Croatian, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese.

Most importantly, the platform increases transparency between R1 and the public. Visitors can view all open, ongoing, and past projects; follow a timeline of key milestones in the planning process; and see real-time results of specific project feedback.

Figure 2-2: MTP Project Page on Engage R1 Website



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan was one of the first project pages on the Engage R1 platform. This page features an overview of the project, a timeline, frequently asked questions, a map of the study area, and the project contact. Throughout the development process, the webpage was updated to show progress on the project timeline, highlight upcoming events, and host surveys and other interactive activities. This webpage will be maintained following the adoption of the plan, with links to the final plan and associated technical reports, such as this one.

Committees

Several of Region 1 Planning Council’s boards and committees were engaged throughout the entire three-year planning process. The level of involvement varied based

on the roles and responsibilities of the committee. Under the “Cooperative Agreement Forming and Empowering the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization,” the MPO consists of two primary standing committees: a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee. Other standing or temporary/special purpose committees can be formed as needed to carry out the duties and functions of the MPO. In addition to the MPO Policy and Technical Committee, R1 has several other committees under its umbrella, including the Community Advisory Forum and the R1 Governing Board, both of which were provided frequent updates on the MTP’s progress.

The purpose, duties, and responsibilities of each committee involved in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan is provided below.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is the leadership and decision-making body of the MPO. It is their responsibility of to direct and oversee the continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) planning process of the MPO to ensure it is in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. The Policy Committee’s membership is representative of the general purpose units of government and organizations in the planning area, as required by Federal Transportation Law. Members of the MPO Policy Committee are shown in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Policy Committee Membership

Agency	Representative
Boone County	Rodney Riley
City of Belvidere	Clinton Morris
City of Loves Park	Greg Jury
City of Rockford	Thomas McNamara
Village of Machesney Park	Steve Johnson
Winnebago County	Joseph Chiarelli
Illinois Department of Transportation, District 2	Trisha Thompson
Rockford Mass Transit District	Michael Stubbe

The Policy Committee meets six times a year, typically on a bimonthly basis. Special meetings may be called if needed. These meetings are open to the public and follow Illinois’ Open Meetings Act (OMA) requirements. Members of the public can request to address the Policy Committee at any meeting.

As the leadership of the MPO, the Policy Committee was updated regularly on the progress of the MTP's development. Additionally, the Policy Committee was asked to give concurrence on a number of elements of the MTP, including on the vision, goals, and strategies; financial assumptions; and list of transportation project priorities. The Policy Committee also has the authority to adopt the final version of the MTP, as well as approve any amendments to the adopted version.

Technical Committee

Under the "Cooperative Agreement Forming and Empowering the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization," the Technical Committee is responsible for providing technical advice and recommendations to the Policy Committee on all matters pertaining to the technical planning functions of the MPO and on other related matters referred to them by the Policy Committee. The Technical Committee members are appointed by the Policy Committee and consist of a representative from local public agencies (LPAs) with implementation responsibility in the planning area. As shown in Table 2-3, the Technical Committee consists of municipal and county public works and planning departments, conservation and park districts, utilities, and the Chicago Rockford International Airport.

This committee meets regularly on the Thursday following the third Tuesday of each month between January and November. These meetings are open to the public and time is allotted at the beginning of each Technical Committee meeting for members of the public to address the committee on transportation-related subject matters.

The Technical Committee served as the steering committee for the MTP's planning process. Members were informed on the process of the plan, participated in robust discussions on the elements of the MTP, and provided their recommendation to the Policy Committee on the concurrence of significant elements of the plan, as detailed above.

Table 2-3: Technical Committee Membership

Standing Members
Boone County, Highway Department
Boone County, Planning Department
Boone County Conservation District
Chicago Rockford International Airport
City of Belvidere, Planning Department
City of Belvidere, Public Works Department
City of Byron
City of Loves Park, Community Development Department
City of Loves Park, Public Works Department
City of Rockford, Community Development Department
City of Rockford, Public Works Department
Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
Four Rivers Sanitary Authority
IDOT, District 2
Rockford Mass Transit District
Rockford Park District
Village of Machesney Park, Community Development Dept.
Village of Machesney Park, Public Works Department
Village of Roscoe
Village of Winnebago
Winnebago County, Community Dev. Department
Winnebago County, Highway Department
Winnebago Co. Soil & Water Conservation District

Ex Officio Members
Boone County Transit
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

Community Advisory Forum

Over the course of the planning process, R1 provided presentations on the development of the MTP, Climate Action Plan (CAP), and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to R1's Community Advisory Forum (CAF). The CAF was established to diversify and increase meaningful input in public participation, a critical element of planning. The CAF membership is broad in its representation to include a wide range of perspectives and constituencies, including, but not limited to, conservation, disability services, education, sustainability, health, hospitality, housing, labor, low-income, minorities, not-for-profit, recreation, senior citizens, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy, small business, tourism, and veterans.

The purpose of the CAF is to:

- Enhance stakeholder input by serving as the primary body representing public opinion in the development of plans and programs.
- Ensure thoughtful, timely advice in public engagement, involvement, and input.
- Ensure all plans and programs consider potential social, economic, and sustainability issues.
- Provide an avenue for continuous interaction and communication between members and staff about the planning process; identifying problems and potential solutions.

Community Advisory Forum meetings are held no less than twice annually, but typically occur on a bimonthly basis. Like other R1 committee meetings, they are open to the public and follow Illinois' Open Meetings Act (OMA) requirements.

Region 1 Planning Council's Governing Board

The Governing Board provides direction and oversight of Region 1 Planning Council's regular activities. The primary purpose of the Governing Board is to encourage the cooperation of the political subdivisions within the region in any matters that may concern the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or other plans established by Region 1 Planning Council. As such, the development of the MTP was shared at a number of the Governing Board meetings. Similar to the Policy Committee, the standing members of the Governing Board are elected or appointed officials from government entities, including county chairpersons, mayors, and village presidents. Associate members of the Governing Board include additional public and private sector representatives. A list of all standing and associate member organizations are provided in Table 2-4.

Meetings are typically held quarterly on the second Thursday of the month, open to the public, and meet all state requirements for open meetings.

Table 2-4: Governing Board Membership

Member Agency
Boone County
Chicago Rockford International Airport
City of Belvidere
City of Freeport
City of Loves Park
City of Rochelle
City of Rockford
City of South Beloit
ComEd
Community Advisory Forum Chair
Four Rivers Sanitation Authority
Greater Freeport Partnership
Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce
Growth Dimensions
Highland Community College
McHenry Community College
McHenry County
McHenry Economic Development Association
Nicor / Southern Co
Northern Illinois University
Northwestern Illinois Building Trades
North Park Public Water District
Rochelle Economic Development Corporation
Rockford Mass Transit District
Rockford Park District
Rock Valley College
Stephenson County
Village of Cherry Valley
Village of Machesney Park
Village of Roscoe
Winnebago County
The Workforce Connection

Rounds of Engagement

As noted in Part 2, the public engagement strategy for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was a multi-year process divided into three rounds of engagement and completed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Climate Action Plan (CAP). Each round of engagement varied in the techniques and tools utilized, as well as the length of time over which it occurred. The following chapter provides an overview of each round of engagement, the techniques and tools utilized, and the input received.

Round #1. Needs & Opportunities

The initial round of public engagement occurred between June 2023 and October 2023. The purpose of this first round of public and stakeholder engagement was twofold. The first purpose was to educate the public on current conditions and planning efforts underway on the three plans. The second purpose was to gather public input on the current state of the region and future opportunities as it relates to six themes:

- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Built Environment & Neighborhoods
- Energy
- Innovation & Finance
- Health & Equity
- Natural Resources & Climate

The information collected was used to frame the regional assessment of the MTP and eventually form the vision,

goals, and strategies. This round incorporated the largest number of public engagement techniques, including key leader interviews.

Key Leader Interviews

The first round of engagement kicked off in late June 2023 with the key leader interviews. Members of the Region 1 Planning Council (R1) Governing Board, which is comprised of representatives from the public, private, and non-profit sectors in the Rockford Region, were chosen as the interviewees. Over the course of two months, over 20 members of the Governing Board were interviewed across the study area.

During the interviews, the leaders were asked a series of questions related to their background and role in their respective community or organization and asked to provide grades on the region's performance in several categories. They were also asked questions specifically related to economic development, infrastructure, and the environment. While each leader brought a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities within the Rockford Region, several common themes emerged, including the lack of diversity in the current housing stock, low housing stock, limited funds for larger infrastructure projects, and water-related concerns, such as water quality and flooding.

One of the questions asked of leaders was to rate the region's performance over the last five years on a scale of one to five in the following categories: human capital, social capital, physical capital, environmental capital, and financial capital. The scores are summarized in Table 3-1.

The full list of questions asked at the key leader interviews can be found in Appendix A.

Table 3-1: Regional Report Card Scores

Category	Definition	Average Score	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Human Capital	The skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual or population, viewed in terms of their value or cost to a community (e.g., education, workforce development)	2.9	1	4
Social Capital	The networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular community, enabling that community to function effectively (e.g., citizen participation, diversity, and sense of community)	3	2	4
Physical Capital	The tangible man-made assets that help and support the community (e.g., transportation, utilities, and real estate)	3.6	2	5
Environmental Capital	The value of the natural resources and benefits that the environment provides to a community (e.g., parks, ecosystems, air, land, water)	3.8	2	5
Financial Capital	The financial resources of the community (e.g., public income/expenditures and public debt)	3.5	1	5

Workshops

A workshop is a collaborative meeting where people can share ideas around a specific topic or theme. It was determined early on in the development of the public engagement strategy for the three plans that facilitated workshops would be useful in hearing new perspectives, getting in-depth input from stakeholders and members of the public, and building consensus around the region’s most pressing needs and opportunities. As such, six workshops were hosted between July and August 2023. Each of the workshops centered around one of the six themes identified above. A schedule of the workshops and number of attendees at each can be found in Table 3-2.

Several fact sheets were developed for the workshops. These fact sheets presented key data points related to the subject-matter being discussed at each workshop. The fact sheets consisted of various visualizations, including heat maps and graphs. Since the workshops were also designed to inform the Climate Action Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the geography of the fact sheets extended into McHenry County, which is not within the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

For each workshop, the agenda began with an overview of the planning process undertaken and the purpose of the workshops. After introductions the attendees were divided into small group discussions where a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was completed. To assist the discussion, a series of questions

were developed around the topics. After the small group discussions, the responses were compiled into a larger list. Attendees were then given three stickers per category to vote on responses they agreed with the most.

Figure 3-1: SWOT Workshop



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

The input from these workshops helped form the basis of the regional assessment of the MTP. The results of the SWOT workshops can be found in Appendix B, and a discussion of the highest-ranked results can be found in [Technical Report #7. SWOT Analysis](#).

Table 3-2: Round #1 Workshop Summary

Date	Time	Topic	Location	Attendees
July 19, 2023	8:30 am- 10:30 am	Built Environment & Neighborhoods	RMTD East Side Transfer Center 725 N. Lyford Road, Rockford, Illinois	14
July 26, 2023	8:30 am- 10:30 am	Transportation & Infrastructure	RMTD East Side Transfer Center 725 N. Lyford Road, Rockford, Illinois	12
August 2, 2023	8:30 am- 10:30 am	Innovation & Investment	RMTD East Side Transfer Center 725 N. Lyford Road, Rockford, Illinois	18
August 16, 2023	8:30 am- 10:30 am	Energy	RMTD East Side Transfer Center 725 N. Lyford Road, Rockford, Illinois	19
August 28, 2023	8:30 am- 10:30 am	Natural Resources & Climate	RMTD East Side Transfer Center 725 N. Lyford Road, Rockford, Illinois	18
August 30, 2023	8:30 am- 10:30 am	Health & Equity	RMTD East Side Transfer Center 725 N. Lyford Road, Rockford, Illinois	26

Open Houses

To supplement the input received at the workshops, two public open houses were also held during the first round of public engagement. Since the workshops were held in the morning, the open houses were scheduled during the evening and at different locations. These events were structured informally with individuals able to drop in at any time and talk one-on-one with R1 staff familiar with the project.

At the open houses, several informational posters were displayed, explaining the three core planning documents and providing socioeconomic information on the county in which the event took place. In addition to the posters, a series of activities were developed to gather input on the six themes discussed at the workshops. These activities are described below:

Activity 1: Built Environment & Neighborhoods (Great Neighborhoods)

Input on the built environment and neighborhoods was collected through an activity in which participants identified aspects of a great place that either they already have (H) or

is missing (M) from their neighborhood or city. Based on the Project for Public Spaces' "What Makes a Great Place?", each participant was given a diagram of 33 characteristics within four components of a great place: access and linkages, comfort and image, uses and activities, and sociability, as shown in Figure 3-3. Participants were also asked to identify the county or municipality in which their neighborhood was. The results of this activity can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 3-2: Built Environment & Neighborhoods Activity



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Figure 3-3: What Makes a Great Place? Activity Sheet

What Makes a Great Place?

Circle the **H** next to all the words you feel describe qualities your neighborhood **has**.

Circle the **M** next to all the words you feel are **missing** from your neighborhood.

Where is your neighborhood?

- Boone County
- McHenry County
- Winnebago County

What city is your neighborhood located in?

Additional Comments:



Activity 2: Energy (Alternative Energy Sources)

For this activity, participants were asked to identify on a poster if they would scale up, kept the same, or scale down various types of energy sources in the Rockford Region. Table 3-3 identifies and defines the energy sources and provides a summary of the results. The activity poster can be found in Appendix C.

Table 3-3: Alternative Energy Sources- Activity Summary

Energy Source	Definition	Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down
Solar	Converts sunlight into electricity. Panels are often formed in an array placed on the ground or on roofs of buildings.	11	1	0
Wind	Often in the form of turbines that use the motion of the wind to turn a shaft on a generator to make electricity.	10	1	2
Geothermal	Heat pumps in the ground that use the temperature of the ground to transfer heat.	10	2	0
Hydropower	Sometimes in a hydropower plant or a dam on a river, this source of power uses the motion of water to generate power.	11	1	0
Biomass	Often derived from organic matter, such as plants (like burning wood in a fireplace). A common example is ethanol produced by corn.	4	1	7
Nuclear	Sustained nuclear fission to generate heat and electricity.	4	6	2
Fossil Fuels	A natural fuel such as coal or gas. Burned to provide heat for use directly, to power engines, or to generate electricity.	6	3	3

Activity 3: Health & Equity (Health Access)

For the health and equity activity, a map of each county was created and displayed. Participants were asked to place a colored dot near the locations “where they go to get – groceries, physical health care, mental health care, and dental care.” The maps are shown in Appendix C.

Figure 3-4: Health & Equity Activity



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Activity 4: Innovation & Investment (Industry Cluster Investment)

To gather information on innovation and investment, participants received \$100 in game money. The participants were able to invest their money in workforce programs within six existing or emerging industry clusters. The industry clusters and the level of investment in each are shown in Table 3-4.

Figure 3-5: Innovation & Investment Activity



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Table 3-4: Industry Cluster Investment - Activity Summary

Industry Cluster	Definition	Winnebago County	Boone County	Total
Clean Energy	Renewable resources are those that are naturally replenished, such as sunlight, wind, water movement, and geothermal heat.	\$220	\$80	\$300
Advanced Manufacturing	Use of innovative technology to improve products or processes with the relevant technology (Artificial Intelligence, 3D Printing, etc.).	\$140	\$120	\$260
Agriculture/Innovative Agriculture	Enhancing both production and quality of food, crops, and secondary products, as well as improving the growing conditions and production process.	\$80	\$140	\$220
Transportation & Warehousing	There are four main modes of transportation in logistics: truck, ship, train, and plane.	\$40	\$180	\$220
Electric Vehicle Sector	The production and sale of electric vehicles and charging stations.	\$80	\$100	\$180
Health Services	Examples include mental health care, dental care, laboratory and diagnostic care, substance abuse treatment, preventative care, physical and occupational health, nutritional support, pharmaceutical care, transportation, and prenatal care.	\$60	\$80	\$140

Activity 5: Natural Resources & Climate (Addressing Climate Change)

Input on natural resources and climate was collected through an activity in which participants were asked to vote on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies they thought were most important for the Rockford Region. Each participant was given three bingo chips to place in buckets associated with each strategy. The strategies and results are shown in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5: Climate Sectors - Activity Summary

Climate Sectors	Total
Mixed Use Development	9
Sustainable Food Access	1
Clean/renewable energy	5
Waste Reduction	9
Restoration of Natural Areas	3
Improving Air Quality	4
Energy Efficient Buildings	2
Sustainable Transportation	6

Figure 3-6: Natural Resources & Climate Activity



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Activity 6: Transportation & Infrastructure (Mobility Bucks)

To gather input on where transportation investments should be allocated, participants receive \$100 in mobility bucks. The participants were able to invest their money, in \$20 increments, into various types of transportation improvements. The infrastructure improvements and the amount of investment is shown in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6: Transportation Investment- Activity Summary

Improvement	Winnebago County	Boone County	Total
Maintenance	\$40	\$280	\$320
Pedestrian Facilities	\$160	\$40	\$200
Bicycle Facilities	\$100	\$40	\$140
Technology	\$40	\$100	\$140
New Roads	\$60	\$80	\$140
Bus Service	\$60	\$60	\$120
Safety Improvements	\$100	\$0	\$100
Road Capacity	\$0	\$60	\$60
Intersection Improvements	\$20	\$40	\$60
Traffic Calming	\$40	\$0	\$40

Figure 3-7: Transportation & Infrastructure Activity



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Public Survey

In order to reach a broader audience, an online survey was made available on the Engage R1 platform from August 2023 to January 2024. For the MTP, the survey included two separate components. The first component was in the form of a traditional survey, consisting of 12 questions. The purpose of this first survey was to gather feedback on the current system, how transportation investments should be prioritized, and how residents and workers in the region currently use the system. In total, 65 survey responses were collected. The second component of the survey asked respondents which transportation investment would they fund. This question mimicked the Mobility Bucks activity from the open houses. However, in this version participants were allotted \$1 million to invest instead of \$100.

A summary of the key findings from the public survey is provided below.

- The three biggest transportation challenges facing the region are: expanding alternative transportation options (55.4 percent), expanding public transportation (50.8 percent), and taking care of the existing system (46.2 percent).
- Over the next 30 years, a majority of respondents think that transportation investments should focus on multiple small-scale projects (67.7 percent) instead of a few large-scale projects (32.3 percent).
- A majority of respondents thought that future growth and development should be managed by reinvesting and developing high density areas, such as downtown and major corridors (56.9 percent), followed by using economic needs as the driving force to determine where growth occurs (33.9 percent) and directing growth to specific locations (9.2 percent).
- The prioritized list of projects, based on the voting results that maximized the defined budget, included maintenance, bus services, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities.

A full summary of the survey results can found in Appendix D.

Pop-Up Booths

As a non-traditional engagement event, a series of pop-up booths were strategically held throughout the region from September to October 2023. These events provided additional opportunities to engage a large number of individuals in an informal setting. The locations and times were chosen to in order to reach a wide range of citizens of different ages and backgrounds. The locations and dates of the pop-up booths can be found in Table 3-7.

In addition to providing information about the planning process, input from the public was collected through a Love/Change poster. The Love/Change poster activity tasked participants with writing down things that they love the most about the Rockford Region and the things they would most like to change. The results of the Love/Change poster activity are included in Appendix E

Figure 3-8: Love/Change Activity Poster



Table 3-7: Round #1 Pop-up Booths Schedule & Locations

Date/Time	Location	Attendees
September 10, 2023 8:30 am-10:30 am	Cycle on Second (Event) 200 Y Boulevard., Rockford, IL	11-25
September 12, 2023 9:30 am-11:30 am	YWCA of Northwestern Illinois 4990 E. State Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
September 13, 2023 10:30 am-12:30 pm	Ida Public Library 320 N. State Street., Belvidere, IL	1-10
September 18, 2023 3:30 pm-5:30 pm	Winnebago County Housing Authority 3617 Delaware Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
October 18, 2023 8:30 am-10:30 am	RPS 205 Academy Expo 8800 E. Riverside Boulevard, Loves Park, IL	>250

Briefings

Throughout the first round of engagement, the Policy and Technical Committees were provided updates of the progress of the MTP development and initial input received from stakeholders and the public. In addition to periodic updates, a SWOT analysis survey was sent to members of the Technical Committee.

Round #2. Strategic Direction

The second round of public engagement occurred in the spring and summer of 2024, with the purpose of gathering input from the public and stakeholders on draft goals and strategies of the MTP. The information collected informed the ranking of the strategies within the document. Four main techniques were used in this round of engagement in combination with various tools.

Workshops

In total, three workshops were held during the second round of public engagement, two of which informed the MTP development. Unlike the first round, these workshops were held at a location within each of the counties and contained the same exercise and discussion at each, with the exception of the McHenry County workshop, which focused solely on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy’s (CEDS) goals and tactics. Attendees from the first round workshops were invited, via email, to attend these workshops as well. Across the Boone and Winnebago County workshops, 36 people attended and participated in the activity.

Table 3-8: Round #2 Workshop Schedule & Locations

Date/Time	Location	Attendees
May 9, 2024 8:30 am- 10:00 am	Region 1 Planning Council Office 127 N. Wyman Street, Rockford, IL	11-25
May 21, 2024 4:00 pm- 5:30 pm	Community Building Complex 111 W. 1st Street, Belvidere, IL	1-10

For this round of workshops, an online interactive polling tool, Mentimeter, was used to collect input on the goals and strategies. This tool allowed facilitators and participants to see real-time responses, as well as record results for post-event analysis.

For each workshop, the agenda began with an overview of the planning process undertaken and the purpose of the workshop. It also provided a brief summary of the results from the first round of engagement. After introductions, the attendees were asked to log into the polling system. For individuals without a smartphone or computer, tablets were provided. Each plan’s goals and strategies were presented. Attendees were asked to verbally comment on the goals and rank the strategies in order of importance.

The results from the Boone and Winnebago County workshops are provided in Appendix F.

Public Survey

During the second round of engagement, a paper and web-based survey titled “MTP: Strategies Survey” was made available. Survey responses were collected online, via the Engage R1 website, and in-person, at pop-up events, from April 15, 2024 through June 17, 2024. The survey targeted those who live, work, and visit Boone and Winnebago counties. Eighteen individuals took the survey. The eight questions were designed to collect their views on the drafted goals and the importance of strategies through open-ended and ranking questions. The survey results were generally aligned with the responses from the workshop polling activities.

A full summary of the results of the survey can be found in Appendix G.

Pop-Up Booths

Similar to the first round of engagement, a series of pop-up booths were hosted between May and June 2024. In addition to providing information about the development process, the goal of these events were to collect input on the plan’s draft strategies. The dates and locations are provided in Table 3-9.

Table 3-9: Round #2 Pop-up Booths Schedule & Locations

Date/Time	Location	Attendees
May 14, 2024 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm	Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens 1354 N. 2nd Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
May 18, 2024 11:00 am- 1:00 pm	Rockford Public Library- East Branch 6685 E. State Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
May 31, 2024 4:00 pm- 8:00 pm	Rockford City Market (event) 116 N. Madison Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
June 1, 2024 10:00 am- 2:00 pm	Severson Dells Nature Center 8786 Montague Road, Rockford, IL	>250

Each pop-up booth presented two posters, one generally about the three plans being presented and one highlighting the goals associated with each plan. Additionally, participants were offered a chance to take the public survey discussed above. A paper version of the survey was available at the booth or participants could scan a QR code for the digital version hosted on Engage R1. Comment cards were also available for members of the public to leave general comments about the goals presented.

Posters from at the pop-up booths can be found in Appendix H.

Round #3. Public Comment

The final round of public engagement activities for the MTP occurred in the spring of 2025. The goal of the final round of public engagement was to present the draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and gather feedback on the document. The final round of public engagement was held for a 30-day comment period, from May 5 to June 6, 2025, and conducted both in-person through open houses and presentations, as well as online through the Engage R1 website.

Open Houses

Four open houses were hosted to present the draft MTP to stakeholders and the public. The open houses were scheduled during the evening and at different locations. These events were structured informally with individuals able drop-in at any time and talk one-on-one with R1 staff familiar with the project. At the open houses, several informational posters and handouts were displayed to present each section of the document. In total, 14 people attended the open houses.

The posters and handouts are included in Appendix I.

Table 3-10: Round #3 Open House Schedule & Locations

Date/Time	Location	Attendees
May 8, 2025 10:00 am- 12:00 pm	Region 1 Planning Council Office 127 N. Wyman Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
May 8, 2025 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm	Region 1 Planning Council Office 127 N. Wyman Street, Rockford, IL	1-10
May 13, 2025 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm	Byron City Hall 232 W. 2nd Street, Byron, IL	1-10
May 19, 2025 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm	Boone County Administration Building 1212 Logan Avenue, Belvidere, IL	1-10

Briefings

As mentioned previously, the MTP was a standing agenda item on the Technical and Policy Committees beginning in June 2023, as well as often discussed at the Community Advisory Forum. Open discussion is afforded on any transportation-related matter at these committee meetings and detailed meeting minutes are posted so that further discussion may occur as needed. The MTP was recommended for adoption by the Technical Committee on June 18, 2025, and adopted by the Policy Committee on June 20, 2025.

Comments Received

During the length of the 30-day comment period for the MTP, held from May 5 to June 6, 2025, no written responses were received.

Appendices

Appendix A. Round #1: Community Leader Interview Questionnaire

Figure A-1: Community Leader Interview Sheet

 COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS Community Leader Interview Script & Questions TO GIVE YOU A BRIEF OVERVIEW, R1 Planning Council is in the process of developing several federally-required planning documents, including a long-range transportation plan, known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), through the US Department of Transportation, and a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), under the guidance of the US Economic Development Administration. We are also developing the region's first Climate Action Plan, aimed at addressing climate changes through mitigation and adaption strategies. Part of this process is to find out what participation and perceptions local community leaders have about the region. Your participation will provide a greater understanding of what is working in your community's planning implementation and what isn't. These results will help show your community leaders how to better shape the region's future success. This tool is flexible enough to apply to any community, regardless of the type of planning approaches it uses. BEFORE WE BEGIN THE INTERVIEW... 1. Your participation will remain completely confidential to ensure that you are able to provide frank and open responses to questions. 2. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete. 3. Aim for 2-3 sentence responses for open-ended questions. 4. If any question or term is unclear, please feel free to ask for clarification. What is your current position? How long have you been in this position? Who do you represent in the community? What area of the region do you serve? Regional Report Card 1. What are the region's top three competitive strengths? 2. In contrast to the strengths of the region, what are the region's top three weaknesses? 3. What would you say are the three key elements of a successful region? 4. Thinking about the region over the past five years, how would you rate the region's performance in the following categories on a scale of 1-5 grading scale? a. Human Capital (e.g., workforce development, retention, and attraction) b. Social Capital (e.g., citizen participation, diversity, and sense of community) c. Physical Capital (e.g., transportation, utilities, and land development) d. Environmental Capital (e.g., natural resources, environmental protection, and climate adaptation) e. Financial Capital (e.g., public income/expenditures and public debt) 127 N Wyman St, Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101 815-319-4180 info@r1planning.org www.r1planning.org  	Infrastructure 1. What are/will be the biggest obstacles in executing infrastructure projects? 2. Are there any specific infrastructure (e.g., utility, communication) issues that the region faces? 3. What do you expect will be the biggest transportation challenges for this region in the next 5-10 years? What about the next 10-20 years? 4. Does your community face housing issue? If so, what are some of those issues? Economic Development 1. What does a skilled workforce mean to you? In your opinion, does the region have an adequate skilled workforce? 2. What are some specific economic development and/or workforce issues that the region faces? 3. What will be the biggest economic challenges for this region in the next 5-10 years? What about the next 10-20 years? Environment 1. What are the top environmental concerns within your community? For example: Water quality/quantity? Energy conservation and consumption? Waste management? Hazard mitigation? Environmental health, e.g., pollution, open space, etc. 2. Can you share any ideas for adapting to climate change that have been successful in other communities that could be implemented in this region?
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Community Leader Interview Script & Questions

TO GIVE YOU A BRIEF OVERVIEW, R1 Planning Council is in the process of developing several federally-required planning documents, including a long-range transportation plan, known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), through the US Department of Transportation, and a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), under the guidance of the US Economic Development Administration. We are also developing the region's first Climate Action Plan, aimed at addressing climate changes through mitigation and adaption strategies. Part of this process is to find out what participation and perceptions local community leaders have about the region.

Your participation will provide a greater understanding of what is working in your community's planning implementation and what isn't. These results will help show your community leaders how to better shape the region's future success. This tool is flexible enough to apply to any community, regardless of the type of planning approaches it uses.

BEFORE WE BEGIN THE INTERVIEW...

1. Your participation will remain completely confidential to ensure that you are able to provide frank and open responses to questions.
 2. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete.
 3. Aim for 2-3 sentence responses for open-ended questions.
 4. If any question or term is unclear, please feel free to ask for clarification.
-

What is your current position?

How long have you been in this position?

Who do you represent in the community?

What area of the region do you serve?

Regional Report Card

1. What are the region's top three competitive strengths?
2. In contrast to the strengths of the region, what are the region's top three weaknesses?
3. What would you say are the three key elements of a successful region?
4. Thinking about the region over the past five years, how would you rate the region's performance in the following categories on a scale of 1-5 grading scale?
 - a. Human Capital (e.g., workforce development, retention, and attraction)
 - b. Social Capital (e.g., citizen participation, diversity, and sense of community)
 - c. Physical Capital (e.g., transportation, utilities, and land development)
 - d. Environmental Capital (e.g., natural resources, environmental protection, and climate adaptation)
 - e. Financial Capital (e.g., public income/expenditures and public debt)

Infrastructure

1. What are/will be the biggest obstacles in executing infrastructure projects?
2. Are there any specific infrastructure (e.g., utility, communication) issues that the region faces?
3. What do you expect will be the biggest transportation challenges for this region in the next 5-10 years? What about the next 10-20 years?
4. Does your community face housing issue? If so, what are some of those issues?

Economic Development

1. What does a skilled workforce mean to you? In your opinion, does the region have an adequate skilled workforce?
2. What are some specific economic development and/or workforce issues that the region faces?
3. What will be the biggest economic challenges for this region in the next 5-10 years? What about the next 10-20 years?

Environment

1. What are the top environmental concerns within your community? For example: Water quality/quantity? Energy conservation and consumption? Waste management? Hazard mitigation? Environmental health, e.g., pollution, open space, etc.
2. Can you share any ideas for adapting to climate change that have been successful in other communities that could be implemented in this region?

Appendix B. Round #1: Stakeholder Workshop Results

SWOT Workshop 1:

Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Title: Built Environment & Neighborhoods

Attendees: 14

Table B-1: Workshop 1- SWOT Themes and Votes

Workshop 1 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Different cultures	4
Parks/outdoor recreation & amenities	3
Native wildlife (plants)	3
Lots of resources available	2
Diversity of housing stock	2
Quality of life	2
Established neighborhoods	2
Affordable housing	2
Highways 90-39-88-80/easy to move around the region	2
School district – Running Start, Career Pathways programs	2
Architectural character/variety of character in neighborhoods	1
Neighborhood groups/sense of community/block parties	1
Interfaith community	1
Safety, or perception of safety	1
Non-profits	1
Low crime (Belvidere)	1
Volunteers – supportive culture	1
Maintained roads	1
Better planning for pedestrians now	1
Neighbors look out for each other	1
Mobility – walk,	0
Music – symphony, rock, something for all	0
Weather/climate	0
Trees	0
Easier to bike than 10 years ago	0
Municipal resources for rehab	0
Strong downtowns	0
Historic preservation	0
Neighborhood grants	0
Strong houses/Rock houses	0
Affordable amenities	0
Community gardens	0

Workshop 1 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Compact neighborhoods	0
Connectivity: rural to urban	0
Easy commutes	0
Accessible educational programs	0
Active community centers	0
Private partners for rehab funding	0
Habitat for Humanity, Northern Illinois Foodbank	0

Workshop 1 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Crime (Rockford)	5
Community action (advocates silenced)	4
Equity (streets, lights, food deserts, east/west)	3
Access to mental health services	3
Lack of safe sidewalks	3
Little support for aging	3
Lack of engagement	3
People not aware of services	2
Roadway conditions, especially in neighborhoods	2
Property taxes	2
Local government responsiveness	2
East/west division, integrated neighborhoods	2
Code enforcement	2
Design features for communities	1
Lack of partnership between banks and contractors (no collaboration on goal of fixing homes/neighborhood)	1
Cost of rehabbing homes	1
Perception that nothing changes here/loss of hope/lack of human-centered focus	1
More lighting (sustainable), standalone street lighting	1
Mass transit	1
Issues ignored	0
Accessibility to built environment	0
East/west biking/walking connection	0
Resources to support biking (racks, etc.)	0
Don't see value in bike paths/alternative transp.	0
Attractiveness	0
Overgreen lots	0
Attractiveness	0
Regulations that prevent repairs are costly (e.g., ADA requirements)	0
No neighborhood groups	0

Workshop 1 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Building/infrastructure deterioration	0
Industrial legacy – blight and pollution	0
Disjointed based off major roads barricaded	0
Adaptable housing	0
Not connected well to Rockford (Belvidere)	0
Lack of education/neighborhood schools	0
Equity of schools	0
People who work here don't live here	0
Lack of diversity in housing options	0
Safety perception	0
Personnel and \$ for crime	0
Rentals not affordable for all levels of income	0
Equity of resources	0

Workshop 1 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Adaptive reuse of buildings/rehabilitation of old properties	5
Riverfront development	4
Open lots/infill development	3
Neighborhood associations, block clubs	3
Bring resources to where people are so they can access	3
New construction housing	3
Blight demolition converted to greenways	3
Local business in neighborhood	2
Create/build connections – Engagement improves safety	2
Climate haven	2
Collaboration between agencies	2
West side healthcare	2
Planning funded	2
Schools	1
Reforestation	1
Marketing neighborhoods	1
Marketing awareness of programs	1
National Register of Historical Landmarks (can provide \$ for repairs)	0
Improvement to customer services (schools, government services)	0
Make government more open	0
Subsidize Lyft, Instacart to improve accessibility	0
Landlord registry	0
CDCs	0
Unified consensus of neighborhood care	0
Complete streets	0

Workshop 1 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Federal and state funding, more grants	0
Volunteerism (211)	0
Leverage active community groups to solve issues and give them funding	0
Total package when redeveloping	0
Natural resources attracting remote workers	0

Workshop 1 - Threats Theme	Votes
Not addressing root causes	6
RPS reputation	5
Failure to listen to diverse voices	4
Lack of housing, people leave	4
Zoning is static	3
Climate change	2
No high-speed internet	2
Keeping youth	2
Doing things same old way/apathy	2
Older homes- \$ for asbestos, lead, broken sidewalk	2
Population loss	2
Poverty – generally and specifically in SE Rockford	1
Financial stability	1
Lack of human resources (planning, factory workers, law enforcement)	1
Public safety/violence/crime	1
Division – social and political	1
Sprawl	1
Power grid aging infrastructure	1
City government	0
Online digital: communication vs. in person	0
Air pollution/contamination	0
Rundown buildings/blight	0
Trust or responsibility of neighbors	0
Remote workers drawing away from downtown	0
Gentrification (housing prices high)	0
Insurance (flood zones)	0
Losing town/neighborhood identity because of rapid growth	0
Lack of housing, to grow or downsize	0
Mixed housing units	0
Road infrastructure	0

SWOT Workshop 2:

Date: Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Title: Transportation & Infrastructure

Attendees: 12

Table B-2: Workshop 2- SWOT Themes and Votes

Workshop 2 - Strengths Theme	Votes
FiberCity installation	7
Park districts	7
New water treatment plants & investments/ improved water treatment	6
Shared use paths/protected lanes	4
Collaboration between organizations	3
Metra/electric buses/EV infrastructure	3
Airport/interstate/commerce	3
Drinkable water	1
Stormwater management programs	1
Different options of transportation modes	1
Well-built highway infrastructure	1
Public transit – service area, affordable, para transit, bike racks	0
Upgraded water mains, replaced lead water line	0
Gateways to communities	0
Strong public officials	0
5G speed. Build out to encourage telecommute	0
Options to get around barriers (construction, flooding)	0
Wayfinding	0
Focus on mitigating and water treatment within department	0
Street lighting in the middle of the day – helps with transit	0
Reuse of old buildings (ex. RVC, ShopKo) – keep retrofitting	0
Local ordinances on water management	0
Maintenance of transportation system (rail crossing, bike traffic light, multimodal)	0
Waste management system open to innovation	0
Good employees	0
Rail/freight can do what roads cannot (weight)	0

Workshop 2 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Lack of funding	10
Lack of planning for maintenance	4
Lack of major investment (roads)	4
Bike path connections lacking	3
Landfills & mitigated liability	3

Workshop 2 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Lack of sidewalk connectivity/accessibility on major roads & crosswalks	2
Bicycling dangerous on every busy intersection (right turn on red very dangerous)	2
Old water pipes in some areas to be replaced	1
Lack of holistic views – small bits of project rather than entire	1
Lack of passive forms of transportation	1
Lack of marketing of transportation system	1
Maintenance/lack of quality in facility upgrades	1
Poor perception on public transit	1
Negative mindset	1
Lack of communication between all parties/to residents	1
Lack of accessible public transportation	1
Future planning for utilization	0
Difficult to get supplies	0
Car dependency/lifestyle choice not required	0
Lack of desired routes	0
Pavement condition	0
Fiber installation damage yards	0
Increase frequency of buses (1 hr is typical, would like 30 min)	0
City dismissive of public questions	0
Requirements reducing ability to improve connections	0
Lack of connection to Chicago/takes too long	0
Divided opinions on transportation	0
Lack of workforce training	0

Workshop 2 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Increased federal and state funding sources	6
Create parks in flooding areas – help improve drainage	6
Connect paths to communities or point of interest	5
Better quality water/less contaminated	3
Citywide composting	3
Technology advancement	2
Recycling – education expanded, people recycling incorrectly	2
Start small with interventions for bicycle infrastructure – focus on safety	2
Traffic signals with bikes	1
Utilize rail more (they are a strength)	1
Complete streets	1

Workshop 2 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Improve transparency & accountability	1
Public shower (Rock River School)	1
Energy generation from waterways	1
Improved education, especially with youth	1
Bikeshare/electric bikes	1
Smaller pop-up buildings/low cost for commercial	0
Hold recurring meetings & include more organizations	0
Improved marketing on existing opportunities	0
Increase communication with all interested parties	0
Better marketing to get community to learn more about these issues	0
Media opportunity/different modes of communication	0
Improve connections of passive modes of travel	0
Environmental impact (wastewater)	0
Wider shoulders on rural roads for biking	0

Workshop 2 - Threats Theme	Votes
Social equity improving older neighborhoods	8
Cost of updating infrastructure in older neighborhoods	8
Inability to pay workforce and compete with other corporations	4
Funding changes/rules & regulations with funding	4
Climate mitigation with more people coming – need to be prepared	3
Marketing to public knowledge of training opportunities	3
Brownfields and legacy pollution	3
Storm sewer failure/flooding	2
Storm events increase intensity & frequency	2
EV stress on infrastructure	2
Need to be accessible for all, not some	1
Debris blocking grates/storm water	0
Communications compliance	0
Workforce training	0
Fewer people for workforce/need manpower to support infrastructure	0
Stigma on workforce	0
Pavement condition due to changing temperatures/climate change	0
Future pandemic better prepared	0

SWOT Workshop 3:

Date: Wednesday, August 2, 2023

Title: Innovation & Investment

Attendees: 18

Table B-3: Workshop 3- SWOT Themes and Votes

Workshop 3 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Apprenticeships/strong skilled trades	8
Airport	6
Advanced manufacturing & aerospace	6
Rockford Promise	3
Strong trades presence	2
Hospitality/leisure growing	2
Resources for small business & affordability	2
Many nonprofits engaged in community	2
Career pathways in schools	1
Library system – lots of public resources	1
Right people in the right places	1
Workforce training – collaboration	1
Regional health center	1
Transportation hubs (39/90)	1
Regional direction – coordinated planning	1
Healthcare	1
College Bridge – training to employment pipeline	1
Public/private business collaboration	1
Innovation & creativity	1
USCSE Export assistance	0
YouthBuild	0
YMCA IT lab	0
West side- strong sense of community	0
Adult educational programs meet metrics (GED, ESL)	0
Entrepreneurship and small business growth	0
Homeless population – strategies lowering rate	0
Headquarters of multinational companies	0
Logistics	0
Refugee resettlement – have prior workforce experience/community support	0
Think Big	0
Strong SBDC	0
Businesses are supportive of small business development	0
RVC programs for small business	0
Excel center	0
Awareness of resources for business	0
Business First (through City of Rockford)	0

Workshop 3 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Interest in accessing small business resources	0
Diverse community	0
Flexibility – education, SNAP, etc.	0
Clean energy adoption – solar programs	0
RACVB	0
Existing experiential education	0
Resources & supports for women & minority-owned businesses	0
Many organizations involved in workforce initiatives	0
Educational partnership with social services, non-profits	0
Collaborative EDOs	0
Lack of boomeranging	0

Workshop 3 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Taxes – property & corporate	7
Soft skills deficiency	5
Lack of tech industry	5
Fewer young workers	4
Educational attainment	4
Lack of re-entry programs	2
Exodus from IL – businesses and people	2
Opportunities for nontraditional students	2
Economy	2
Funding	2
Transportation/public transit	2
Affordable housing	1
Regional approach to economic development	1
Philanthropy	1
Financial support in west side investment (private)	1
Low employment participation	1
West side food desert	0
RPS 205 school scores	0
Non-profits work in silos	0
West side does not see the economic advantage	0
Lack of community development corporation-specific to west side	0
Continual disinvestment on west side	0
Awareness of minority, women-owned business	0
No one willing to take a stand and change laws, promote initiatives (too cautious)	0
Reputation of RPS 205	0
Flexibility, lack of understanding of barriers (employers)	0

Workshop 3 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Retirements – vacuum of talented replacements	0
Regional investment	0
Community engagement in education matters	0
Communicate data/relevancy to everyone. People don't understand what it means.	0
Scholarships are only one year	0
Student loans	0
Language barriers	0
Lack of training opportunities	0
Drop-out rate	0
Disenfranchisement	0
Workforce development agencies work in silos	0
Pathway to climate-related jobs	0
Lack of transparency of education & training costs	0
Lack of mentorship to better self	0
Rockford stigma of negative narrative	0
Lack of education in tech	0
West side needs to commute for EVERYTHING	0
Underemployment	0
Lack of good space for manufacturing (old & outdated)	0
Early childhood education	0
Childcare hard to find	0
Training for clean jobs	0
Teacher shortage	0
4-year STEM technical degree program in Rockford	0

Workshop 3 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Economic development initiatives	5
Transportation access	3
Public-private collaboration for development	3
Grants	3
Central location between multiple cities	2
Teachers adopting new methods	2
Excel center	2
Rockford downtown development	2
Build robust intern program	1
Public sector sustainable energy	1
Semiconductor industry – fed & state funding	1
Reinvestment	1
Re-entry programs	1
Financing for businesses	1
AI	1

Workshop 3 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Social media & technology	1
U of I and NIU must be leveraged	1
Experiential education – PPS – expand it	1
Skills-based salary	1
West State St. Economic corridor	1
Geography – room to grow	1
Financial incentives	1
Communicating that education is a value	1
Peoria – The Big Table	0
Financial education opportunity education	0
South Main St. corridor	0
Input from successful entrepreneurs to move us forward in business	0
Rail to Chicago	0
Duplication of training opportunities in communities other than Rockford	0
Small pockets of success – expansion (ex. Apprenticeships)	0
Change workday/workweek	0
Update office & manufacturing space	0
Federal funding at all-time high	0
Promoting culture	0
Business + entrepreneur collaboration	0
Strong entrepreneur support on collaborations	0
Regional entrepreneurship strategy	0
Finding systems we can tap we are not aware of	0
I-90/I-39 corridor	0
Government contracts for MOB WOB	0
Incentive packages for businesses	0
Teaching life skills	0
IT	0

Workshop 3 - Threats Theme	Votes
Policies around re-entry	1
Benefit Cliff (wages, housing)	1
Silos	1
Lack of learning from other states' example	1
Perception of value of education	1
AI	1
Geography	1
Entrenched, out-of-date systems	1
Complexity of system (educational)	0
Rockford image	0
Disconnected communities	0
Hoops government forces us to go through	0
Regulations – too many!	0
IL set up to be very locally-controlled	0
Success with homelessness attracts more	0
Lack of office & manufacturing space	0
Awareness of resources	0
Lack of employer flexibility	0
Hard to get anything done due to state government	0
Extreme workforce needs	0
Slow to embrace climate change	0
Continuous disruptions	0
Migration	0
Worker documentation (IDs, etc) needs for employment	0
Wisconsin = space	0
RPS image	0
Gentrification through private equity funding	0
Citizens disinterested	0

Workshop 3 - Threats Theme	Votes
Competition from other states	4
Resistance to change	4
Empty Stellantis	3
Population decline	3
Prioritize infrastructure	3
Preparation for the future	2
Perception of poor incentives for businesses	2
Stigma	2
Regional competition (Win, Boone, MCH)	2
Not confident in Rockford k-12 education	1
Lack of skilled talent	1

SWOT Workshop 4:

Date: Wednesday, August 16, 2023

Title: Energy

Attendees: 19

Table B-4: Workshop 4- SWOT Themes and Votes

Workshop 4 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Grid management technologies are far better in our region today	7
Youth thinking about climate change and sustainability	6
State solar incentives (best in US)	6
Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (training for solar)	4
Good electrical grid	3

Workshop 4 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Economically competitive solutions (solar, wind, nuclear)	3
Talent, organization in region to explore energy options	2
Growing Interest at schools (k-12) students and staff	1
Nuclear	1
Buried power lines (where exists)	1
Natural gas	1
ComEd beneficial electric plan (EJ communities)	1
Community solar opportunities (designate provider with ComEd)	1
Community college EV courses	1
ComEd EV pilots (coming soon) in Rockford	1
Land	0
REAP grant for rural renewable energy	0
10% of energy in IL is wind	0
East Rockford has good energy infrastructure	0
Programs to incentivize efficiency	0
Government, education realize importance of CE and are building programs	0
Energy structures help families and people in need	0
Rebound time after storm damage	0
Net metering	0
State involvement	0
Local utility subsidy	0
Current and pending funding (rebates/incentives)	0
Impact of SolSmart in city of Rockford	0
Geothermal innovation at RVC	0
Support to increase EV charging infrastructure	0
Organizations working for clean energy	0
Collaboration among funding (ComEd, R1)	0
4K to 12K improvement to energy grid (ComEd) upgrades	0
New electrical wiring posts (Rural St.) = more reliability	0
Solar panels community project	0
Rock Valley EV maintenance courses	0
RMTD and Rock Valley hybrid bus program	0
Solar energy present	0
# of solar permits (~1200)	0
Zion West solar program	0

Workshop 4 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Energy equity	5
Lack of curriculum and training (k-12)	4
Lack of understanding of sustainability	4
Local financing – not enough	3
Inefficient housing increases energy use	3
Rural infrastructure (Village of Winnebago, Roscoe, Rockton, Poplar Grove, etc.)	2
Perception gas is better than electricity. Not prepared to convert away	2
Naysayers	2
Affordability of EV cars (personal/individual)	1
Costs of EV charging stations	1
What are checks and balances with transitions to new energy	1
Political environment	1
Coal power plant nearby – expected to operate for 40 more years	1
State involvement	1
# of EV stations in region & EV purchasing available	1
Sourcing rare earth materials	1
Inadequate recycling	1
People stuck with solar panels after companies leave	0
Impossible to access private capital for EV, solar investments	0
Lack of use of solar for all by landowners	0
Companies not informing residents of solar benefits	0
Movements slow to get off the ground and \$ in communities (CEJA, FEJA)	0
Target solar communities	0
Permitting of developing activity (a decade)	0
Lack of battery storage or technologies	0
No proactive regulation of utilities	0
Demographic/income disparities vis a vis energy investment	0
Disparity between counties willing to be progressive	0
Lack of advocacy for the regular consumer of energy	0
New renewable facilities replace old in same location (no relocation)	0
Grid management technology	0
Societal demand not met	0
Increasing fossil fuel capacity – STOP using	0
Employees at utilities don't understand business	0
Divide in areas receiving new infrastructure	0

Workshop 4 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Alternative modes of transportation relying on cleaner sources	0
Shuttles, carpooling, bike lanes – currently DANGEROUS	0
How to normalize solar (aesthetics)	0
Solar farms = eyesore	0
Lack of skilled labor – fossil fuel worker needs to be trained again	0
Not spread out to under-resourced communities	0
Lack of access in low income areas	0
Consumer information (lack of communication & interest)	0
Lack of understanding benefits	0
Lack of education and access in underserved areas	0
Education needs to get to communities across whole city, not just east side	0
Communication within communities from people invested in that area (trusted)	0
Kids' routes to school – sidewalks, safety	0
Lack of neighborhood organizations	0
Grid improvement to support EV changes	0
EV station locations (equitable access)	0
Education needs to be very inclusive	0
Not aware there are energy efficiency programs	0
Not aware of incentives, rebates available	0
Accessibility – follow up not available to private sector (EV charging, solar connections)	0

Workshop 4 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Education to public so they can make informed decisions (ex. Efficiency, adopting new forms)	7
Develop middle-level skilled workers	4
Redevelop grid to be flexible for future energy demand	4
Communication to public about importance, availability of \$	4
Building codes	3
CEJA	3
Sustainable infrastructure educational program	2
Working with media to spread awareness	2
Bad weather prompts need to act	2
Teaching conservation	1
Create list of banks that will finance sustainable energy	1
Opportunity to grow more energy-related jobs in the trades	1

Workshop 4 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
IL climate bank	1
Community of the future (ComEd Smart program) ie need for solar & events	1
New incentives & rebates for clean energy	1
Competition with utility providers	0
Community solar to not rely on bigger grid and its uncertainties	0
Merge the policy-making from different government agencies	0
Workforce	0
River provides opportunity for hydro	0
Working with and educating youth	0
Use of industrial roof for solar	0
Enhance business performance (solar)	0
Community surveys to identify support	0
Solar buildings are more desirable for renters and owners	0
DOE federal funding/grants	0
Education: people currently unaware & don't believe in climate change	0
More coordinated educational opportunities	0
Collaboration on how to reach people	0
Other educational opportunities pathways to clean energy)	0
Investment locally to train, build skilled workforce	0
Educate without scaring or misinforming about new energy technologies	0
EV make ready program (mitigate costs)	0
\$\$\$ coming	0
EV charging infrastructure (funding opportunities)	0
Engage faith-based orgs	0
Target spots people already frequent for education	0
Working with local union and high school clean energy jobs	0
Build grassroots understanding	0
Marketing	0
Educate people on benefits of clean energy	0
Increased communication of current efforts	0
ComEd devices that optimize energy (DER)	0
More efficient communication (online portal-ComEd) about solar	0
Accessible energy	0
Energy efficiency	0
Company leaders pass on their knowledge to consumers to emulate strategies on their own	0

Workshop 4 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Sustain Rockford: grant for solar expo and solar committee	0
2024 Solar Expo & Conference	0
Utility companies can do more to educate	0
People investing in houses and alternate energy options because they are not moving	0

Workshop 4 - Threats Theme	Votes
Local municipalities need to streamline process	7
Myths & misinformation	6
Political environment (next election)	6
Lack of urgency	4
Lack of understanding of local sustainability resources	4
Path to incentives, \$ too complex to take advantage	2
Lack of & failure to educate stakeholders	2
Huge \$ investment for orgs	1
Naysayers	1
Not considering environmental/sustainable impact on energy expansions	1
Unbalanced system (for sustainability)	1
Time	1
Disappearance of workforce to support new energy sector	1
Ignorance	0
Communities most threatened: low-income (can't flee), women & children, elderly, sickly	0
Communities are very wary of this change to renewables	0
Ongoing use of fossil fuels & stop building capacity for it	0
Pressure to solve short-term problems	0
\$\$ and skilled workforce being used for urgent disasters	0
We are reactive instead of proactive	0
Lack of collaborative agenda: legislators/ consumers	0
Conflicting programs	0
Changing energy programs midstream	0
Flooding + droughts + intense rain = infrastructure problems	0
Increased temperatures = increased energy demand	0
People away from city (different geographies)	0
Companies passing consumers off – not trying to help, send to website	0

Workshop 4 - Threats Theme	Votes
Energy companies (gas, electric)	0
Extreme weather impacts energy grid	0
Lack of understanding of financing (from residential customers)	0
Landlords are uneducated or not incentivized to adopt energy efficiency, new tech	0
Impact of wind and solar on farmland	0
Complacent with current situation (renters) not motivated to change	0
Lack of cohesion among orgs	0
Too many programs	0
Not enough energy to respond to demand	0
Agenda needs to be electricification capacity	0
Lack of urgency for some people	0
Stranded resources, i.e. dismantled power plant or auto plant (Stellantis)	0
Alternative energy sources of grid fails	0
COVID-19 changed the profile for energy peaks	0

SWOT Workshop 5:

Date: Wednesday, August 28, 2023

Title: Natural Resources & Climate

Attendees: 18

Table B-5: Workshop 5- SWOT Themes and Votes

Workshop 5 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Forest preserves & protected land	10
Improvement in planting native plants due to increased education	5
# of public entities working on local conservation	5
Ecotourism	3
Sustainable agriculture incentives & stewardship awards	3
815 pride – natural resources adds to it	3
Quality of life	3
There are projects in schools, need to expand	2
Rockford has good, equitable, tree canopy	2
Increased environmental enforcement among local governments and partner organizations	2
Mindfulness & collaboration among public & private entities to mitigate use of materials (concrete over any natural resource)	1
Climate change lesser impact here than other parts of world	1
Geographic location is favorable to mitigate climate impacts	1
Beautiful rolling hills & topography that's favorable to recreation	1

Workshop 5 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Required planting species list around solar	1
Learning center in Caledonia: master gardening program, soil & water conservation district, Winnebago County Health Dept.	1
Increased willingness to collaborate to make environmental change	1
Hardwood trees – most effective in removing CO2 from atmosphere	1
Protecting waterways increases water quality	1
Four Rivers Sanitation (cleaning waters)	1
Attempt to control invasive species	0
Location of preserves (near waterways)	0
Conservation reserve program	0
Natural resource (NRCS) no-till programs	0
Stormwater education & updating surface water ordinances	0
Boy/Girl Scouts teach knowledge/respect of nature	0
Agency programming – education	0
Expanding education to farmers to adapt their practices to climate change and other impacts (Angelica Organics Learning Center)	0
People passionate about solar	0
Clean energy-powered buses (air quality)	0
Nuclear is improving air quality	0
Wind & solar	0
Area feels more like a retreat than bustling urban area	0
Lower restrictions on lawn maintenance (allow native to grow)	0
Living lands & water tree program	0
40 deg latitude – not too hot, not too cold	0
Changed development from manufacturing to recreational	0
Rural residents learn about environment as part of daily lives	0
Leverage advantages of rural and urban	0
Water quality lowers heat, habitat, biodiversity	0
Service water, groundwater	0
Currently an attainment zone	0
State & federal urban forestry grants available	0
Quality of farmland, trees, water	0
Plenty of farmland and wetland habitats	0
Existing resilience in crop production during drought	0
Topography (habitat protection)	0
Transportation infrastructure allowing access to recreation	0

Workshop 5 - Strengths Theme	Votes
No mining/oil	0
Collaboration among grants (arboretum & soil/ water)	0
People are human (natural) resources	0
Access to greenspace	0
Resident recycling available	0
Considerable options among recycling non-food organics, such as leaves	0
Improvement in participation in outdoor recreation	0
Mighty Vine business – high interest (hydroponic tomato product)	0
City & Klehm partnership for tree planting	0
Sustain Rockford composting program, workshops, conference	0
Protecting river corridors	0
Water quality improvements within the City of Rockford	0
Using the rivers & lakes for recreation – fishing, kayaking	0
Awareness of water supply & demand issues	0
Fishermen care about clean waterways	0
Rock River brings people together	0

Workshop 5 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Land use change creating new flood zones & risks – housing & construction without proper consideration	6
Kids don't go outside and get involved in nature	5
Hard to access forest preserve without car	3
Lack of awareness of native plants, importance of greenspace	3
Who owns the problem? Not defined so no one fixes	3
Lack of education from government	3
Lack of composting	3
Increase in intense rain events – we're not equipped to handle	2
Building codes – energy efficiency, water use	2
Balance between development & preservation	2
Connectivity habitat	2
What \$ is spent on reflects values (it's not the environment)	1
Lack of public support/education to land-use management	1
Not enough staff to manage greenspace	1
Truck traffic in region	1

Workshop 5 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
City's recycling improvements (cost)	0
By ignoring old infrastructure, creates environmental hazards (flooding, pesticides, property damage)	0
Lack of action among federal agencies (EPA)	0
Lack of awareness to the linkages in environment & human health	0
Urban sprawl and lack of housing density	0
People missing context & general understanding	0
Simplify challenge before us (people don't know how to act)	0
Old infrastructure (drain pipes) need to be replaced and people don't know how to vote for change	0
Need for natural resource evaluation before construction	0
Legacy effects of high polluting industries along rivers & streams	0
Lack of awareness on the health consequences to pool indoor & outdoor air quality	0
Slow adaptation/response to flooding events	0
Airport warehouse expansion on prairie	0
Education on environment considered extracurricular (k-12)	0
Not enough educational resources/curriculum	0
Perception that nature is far away – only in national parks	0
Low turnout in climate-related programs	0
Lack of environmental taxes	0
Lack framework to protect private land	0
Lack of political will (reaction not preventing)	0
39 South city – litter & pollution apparent	0
Lack of allocation to fund natural resource management projects	0
Not bikeable or walkable	0
High car dependence	0
Educate lawmakers on environment	0
Legacy effects of groundwater contamination – brownfields, etc.	0
Breakdown in communication and collaboration among developers & governments	0
Everyone doesn't have trash and recycling	0
Consumerism leading to waste	0
Worst landfill in the state (failed mitigation efforts)	0
Property owners not enforcing codes on older buildings	0
Planning that accounts for current and future risks (flood zones)- rent properties	0

Workshop 5 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Invasive species (honeysuckle, reef grass, teasle, etc.)	0
People actively preventing improvements (resident won't let county on property to fix old drainpipes)	0
People unaware, so they don't care about issues	0
People are not angered enough to change	0
Crashing songbird population – prairie loss, farmland development into residential communities	0
Overconsumption of water supply vs. recharge rates	0

Workshop 5 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Implementing best practices & incentives to do so	5
Restore native habitat	4
Incorporate environment in curriculum and other local education programs	4
Government coordination	3
Green behavior involved in community behavior	3
Children education on environment management	3
Educate & involve farmers in sustainability	2
Getting in nature helps mental, physical health (messaging)	2
Build stronger sense of community & collective responsibility	2
Increasing biodiversity and tree planting in vacant & owned lots	2
Hospitals, schools reduce food waste & packaging	1
Restaurant composting	1
Expansion of composting programs	1
Keith Creek greenway implementation	1
Heat pumps in warehouses	1
Clear identification of who owns the problem	1
\$ is available, need to be aware of it	1
Building collaboration among local governments, the public, and businesses	1
Parking lot with solar panels & cisterns	1
Educate on what trees to plant & where	0
Incorporate climate into other interested programs (guided hikes)	0
Recreation connection to clean water – need education	0
Rusty patch bumblebee is now listed and is home here (manage habitat)	0

Workshop 5 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Tree canopy – expand	0
Municipalities lead in environmental efforts (solar panel & turf removal)	0
Diversification of tree varieties	0
Commercial composting	0
Educate climate deniers on economic benefits	0
Styrofoam ban	0
Waste recycling education on what is taken and what contaminates	0
Youth education on waste	0
Waste diversion & sorting at landfill	0
Manufacturers should have recycling plan for their products	0
Educate community on recycling	0
Education Local government, kids in schools, solid waste	0
Increasing access to recycling (incentivize)	0
Source reduction of plastic in the region	0
Funding & education about cover crops	0
Make urgency, awareness easily accessible to people (technology)	0
Eat local	0
Improving food waste issues	0
Standardize amount of trucks for pickups (3 dif providers)	0
Increased public pressure on elected officials	0
Issues need more attention – make it interesting/entertaining	0
Technology to get kids exposed, interested in nature	0
Explain/ID nature in world. (ex. Plaques ID type of tree in park)	0
Other organizations step in to provide environmental education (4H, park district)	0
Permeable pavement, bioswales	0
Community solar programs	0
Climate action pathways for schools (green job training)	0
Engage school districts and find \$ for buses, etc. to get kids out of classroom (field trips to natural areas)	0
Increase investment in education (climate change education)	0
More programs like Terracycle	0

Workshop 5 - Threats Theme	Votes
Urban sprawl allowed	9
Political divide & lack of education	9
Green programs not being implemented	4
Human health	4
New invasive species	3
Joliet water usage taking up Boone Co. groundwater	2
Inertia/lack of urgency	2
Long-term water supply issues	2
Fears still present in 5 years	2
Increased political polarization	2
Adapting to climate displacement	1
Affordability of food & access to food	1
Rather have today's taxes (for development) than tomorrow's consequences	1
Increase in heavy precipitation events (flooding)	1
Lack of awareness or political will among elected officials	1
Climate: heat in summer affecting corn yields	1
Alleviate mandate costs	1
Lack of advocacy for wildlife & habitats	0
Food security issues leading to climate displacement and provision of resources	0
Lack of long-term planning	0
Hard to think long-term when we might not be around	0
Equitable access to public health resources	0
Development into open & natural resources	0
No natural barriers to prevent urban sprawl	0
Water quality companies contaminating	0
Flooding, tree falling, impact to waterways	0
Air quality from emissions & wildfires	0
Ability to preserve land	0
Manufacturing workers affected by heat	0
Property damage	0
The signs of extreme heat events to people and wildlife (urban heat island)	0
People don't want to look out for others – me, me, me	0
Increased severity in drought events (short, intense periods of rainfall)	0
Affordability & accessibility of AC to manage heat	0
Climate anxiety	0

SWOT Workshop 6:

Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Title: Health & Equity

Attendees: 26

Table B-6: Workshop 6- SWOT Themes and Votes

Workshop 6 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Parks system – wellness	8
Mental Health Board presence	8
Hospital systems	7
Long history of serving community health needs	7
Crusader, Miles Square – federally qualified health centers	3
Social capital, support services: church support groups	3
Activism: many volunteers, high community support	2
First responders, community training on how to respond to people with disabilities	2
Diversity of services	2
Local legislators supportive of health	2
Resources for refugees (through FQHCS)	2
Public transportation for medical appointments (urban)	1
Organizations implementing more equitable practices for specific populations	1
How we talk about mental health changing	1
Crisis intervention training	1
Pockets of cultural support	1
Elder services – Lifescape, Oak St., AAA	1
Telehealth helps access	1
Volunteers passionate	0
Grassroots – meet unique needs	0
Large park systems	0
In general, inclusive access	0
Health system: 3 to serve community of this size	0
Access to UW	0
Health systems give back	0
Open dialogue (at certain levels)	0
K-12 increased perception of mental health	0
Mental health awareness/discussion	0
Awareness of mental health importance surging	0
Community gardens	0
Good recreation at no cost	0
Increased funding for mental health (leadership)	0
School of medicine and nursing	0
UIC programs (pharmacy, medicine, nursing)	0
Diverse employment	0

Workshop 6 - Strengths Theme	Votes
Connections with partnerships between agencies	0
Number of providers (health care)	0
Lots of healthcare systems (Rockford)	0
Good mental health at clinician level	0
Specialty services for people with disabilities	0
Farmer's market – local farms accessible	0
Food pantries	0
RVC & Crusader offers free basic services for dental care	0
Family Peace Center	0
Interdisciplinary mental health partnership	0
Crisis response changing, more tools available – CESSA, 988	0
Flexible programming from provider	0
Elected leadership	0
Rosecrance CCBHC (health center), multiple locations	0
Lots of social service organizations	0
Local connections to UA hospital	0
Youth services	0
Rockford Park District	0
YMCA	0
Cross-train public safety officials with mental health	0
Good funding sources	0
Social service organizations interact well holistically	0
Collaboration	0
Foundations: smaller foundations filling gaps	0
Immigrant services	0
Resources (transportation) for older populations	0
Rockford Regional Health Council	0
McHenry has large funding for mental health	0
Park City Dental partnership with local schools	0

Workshop 6 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Health literacy	10
Lack of psychiatrists	8
Transportation	6
Social media – spreading misinformation	5
Lack of early intervention	4
Food insecurity	4
Politics	3
Gaps in access (age to qualify for services)	3
Lack of quality of Medicaid and Medicare providers	2

Workshop 6 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Health education for k-12	2
Lack of education on serious mental illness, disability rights	2
Some health issues receive much more education and treatment than others	1
Boone has fewer health resources (only immediate cares)	1
Access to therapists (hours, system)	1
Lack of diversity in health care providers	1
Lack of local specialty care	1
Lack of LGBTQ+ providers	1
Loss of Children Services Network	0
Few youth mental health beds	0
Lack of mental health care in other languages	0
Translation services can be a struggle to acquire for agencies	0
Lack of availability of translators/interpreters	0
Federal funding	0
Duplication of services	0
Limited access/capacity	0
Distribution of poverty	0
Limited options for advanced degrees in health-related fields	0
Lack of funding for bilingual services	0
Bilingual access (Arabic, Swahili)	0
Diminished legitimate local media	0
Boone has a lack of funding for mental health	0
West side lacks services and retail	0
Closing of Rockton Mercy	0
Disparities between neighborhoods (housing)	0
Food deserts	0
Access to pantries	0
High wait times/wait lists	0
Low income service workers, immigrants not being served	0
Meeting people where they are	0
Getting public health education to people – don't make them travel	0
Less trust in advantages science offers	0
Harder to access dental services beyond basic treatment for low income	0
Not all populations reached equally	0
Provider shortage	0
Staffing shortages for healthcare workers	0
"Racism, disability not a problem because I haven't experienced it"	0

Workshop 6 - Weaknesses Theme	Votes
Lack of health resources/services in rural communities	0
Facilities not accessible for disabilities	0
For-profit health systems	0
Unwanted referrals (on behalf of client)	0
Misplaced referrals	0
Lack of sensitivity by individual providers	0
Lack of specialists (availability)	0
Healthcare worker turnover	0
SCESP – lack of hours	0
Lack of collaboration between 3 major health centers in area (Mercy, OSF, UW)	0
Limited substance abuse centers for uninsured	0
Complicated directions/requirements for certain populations (lack of technology)	0
Navigating health system is difficult	0
Whole community is not being served	0
Access to transportation/transportation system	0
Capacity of care vs. access (limited)	0
Lack of charity care from health systems	0
Define and understand trauma	0
Awareness of available services	0
We know who's most at risk but not addressing	0
Transportation to all health services, not just healthcare	0
Multiple schools share 1 health provider	0
Loneliness/lack of socialization, especially for rural communities and older populations	0
Lack of communication between adults & youth	0
Lack of focus on elementary behavioral/mental health	0
Lack of vigor around wellness – approach is typically reactive	0

Workshop 6 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Collaboration between services	10
Collaboration	7
Comprehensive health education curriculum k-12	6
Sharing community healthcare experiences – outreach	5
Being trauma-informed	5
Centralized source	4
Identify who will fix housing problems	3
Offering cultural sensitivity training	3
Expanding access to higher education	3

Workshop 6 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Career pathways for health care	2
Understand various perspectives from different groups to understand mistrust of medical services	2
Education on newer tech	1
Being responsible for each other	1
Awareness – your mental health doesn't define you. Peer education, not from medical professionals	1
Funding action vs funding salaries	1
Build a bigger table	1
Intentional with funding	1
Use of AI in healthcare	0
Revitalization of after-school programs	0
Improve sub-standard housing – improves health	0
Housing building codes, zoning, improve old housing	0
Advocacy attention to nature conservancy, sustainability	0
Social media	0
School districts implement health food options	0
Revitalization of community centers, especially for children	0
Community centers usage: YMCA, faith-based, park district	0
Marketing and services	0
Community-wide equity training	0
30-day equity challenge	0
Ensuring class action lawsuit proceeds reach local populations	0
Training for community health care	0
Engage the people in local opportunities through tech/media	0
Technology to communicate and gain knowledge	0
Transparent conversations	0
Broadband for rural communities (broadband grants)	0
Continued training for healthcare workers	0
Grants for training health-care workers	0
Willingness to train and be trained	0
Willingness of organizations to collaborate	0
Caregiver parental training	0
Increase Telehealth	0
Reorganizing local resources to focus on building health communities	0
Utilizing technology for translation services	0
WI and IL work together better in emergencies/pandemic	0

Workshop 6 - Opportunities Theme	Votes
Mortality education	0
Personal hygiene education	0
Funding structure	

Workshop 6 - Threats Theme	Votes
Distrust	10
Disconnect between found research & practice	8
Lack of communication between agencies	7
Misinformation and generalization	7
Technology – people not communicating to each other	6
Competition of funding	5
Stigma in seeking mental health	4
Unprepared: lack of a plan in region	3
Egos	3
Gun violence	2
Unaware of how to navigate system	2
Politicizing of public health/mistrust of public health resources	2
Dependency on services	2
Issues with violence in community	2
Health threats resulting from climate change events	1
Lack of support & bias against LGBTQ+	1
Reliance on social media/screen time by children	1
No comprehensive health care system to handle pandemic	0
Future pandemics	0
Fear of large scale health crisis	0
National social media perspectives/opinions influencing health understanding & trust	0
Working at home – hurts social, physical health	0
Racism	0
Socioeconomic status	0
Cultural differences increases barriers	0
Bias against immigrants	0
Silos during pandemic	0
Increase in aggression/violence in mental health, leading to turnover	0
Social stigma to receiving services	0
Political divide	0
Too much focus on one source of threat	0
Climate change – better responsiveness	0
Mental health issues in regards to workforce and crime	0
Stigma around STDs leading to lack of awareness/prevention	0

Appendix C. Round #1: Open House Activity Materials & Results

Open House Activity 1 - Built Environment and Neighborhood

What Makes a Great Place? Instructions

What Makes a Great Place?

Circle the **H** next to all the words you feel describe qualities your neighborhood **has**.

Circle the **M** next to all the words you feel are **missing** from your neighborhood.

Where is your neighborhood?

- a. Boone County
- b. McHenry County
- c. Winnebago County

What city is your neighborhood located in?

Additional Comments:

Figure C-1: What Makes a Great Place? Activity Sheet

What Makes a Great Place?

Circle the **H** next to all the words you feel describe qualities your neighborhood **has**.

Circle the **M** next to all the words you feel are **missing** from your neighborhood.

Where is your neighborhood?

- a. Boone County
- b. McHenry County
- c. Winnebago County

What city is your neighborhood located in?

Additional Comments:



Table C-1: Activity 1 Results by County

Great Places Characteristics	Winnebago: Has	Winnebago: Missing	Boone: Has	Boone: Missing
Neighborly (Sociability)	6	0	5	0
Pride (Sociability)	5	1	5	0
Friendly (Sociability)	6	0	5	0
Interactive (Sociability)	1	2	3	2
Welcoming (Sociability)	4	1	6	0
Belonging (Sociability)	4	1	5	0
Volunteerism (Sociability)	2	1	3	1
Unique (Sociability)	3	3	3	2
Accessible (Access & Linkages)	5	1	3	2
Walkable (Access & Linkages)	3	2	4	1
Attractive (Access & Linkages)	4	2	4	1
Connected (Access & Linkages)	2	3	4	1
Visible (Access & Linkages)	3	1	4	2
Convenient (Access & Linkages)	6	0	4	2
Amenities (Access & Linkages)	2	1	1	4
Affordable (Access & Linkages)	5	0	4	1
Fun (Use & Activity)	1	2	3	2
Active (Use & Activity)	5	1	4	0
Options (Use & Activity)	2	2	1	3
Cultural (Use & Activity)	2	2	2	2
Diverse (Use & Activity)	4	1	3	2
Busy (Use & Activity)	3	1	0	5
Sustainable (Use & Activity)	2	3	2	2
Thriving (Use & Activity)	4	1	2	3
Safe (Comfort & Image)	6	0	6	0
Clean (Comfort & Image)	4	2	5	1
Green (Comfort & Image)	5	0	5	0
Sittable (Comfort & Image)	2	3	3	2
Charming (Comfort & Image)	3	2	4	2
Spiritual (Comfort & Image)	4	0	4	1
Bright (Comfort & Image)	1	2	2	4
Historic (Comfort & Image)	3	2	4	2

Table C-2: Activity 1 Results by Place

Great Places Characteristics	Rockford: Has	Rockford: Missing	Machesney Park: Has	Machesney Park: Missing	Belvidere: Has	Belvidere: Missing
Neighborhoodly (Sociability)	6	0	1	0	5	0
Pride (Sociability)	5	1	1	0	5	0
Friendly (Sociability)	6	0	1	0	5	0
Interactive (Sociability)	1	2	0	0	3	2
Welcoming (Sociability)	4	1	0	0	6	0
Belonging (Sociability)	4	1	0	0	5	0
Volunteerism (Sociability)	2	1	0	0	3	1
Unique (Sociability)	3	3	0	0	3	2
Accessible (Access & Linkages)	5	1	0	0	3	2
Walkable (Access & Linkages)	3	2	1	0	4	1
Attractive (Access & Linkages)	4	2	1	0	4	1
Connected (Access & Linkages)	2	3	0	0	4	1
Visible (Access & Linkages)	3	1	0	0	4	2
Convenient (Access & Linkages)	6	0	0	0	4	2
Amenities (Access & Linkages)	2	1	1	0	1	4
Affordable (Access & Linkages)	5	0	1	0	4	1
Fun (Use & Activity)	1	2	1	0	3	2
Active (Use & Activity)	5	1	1	0	4	0
Options (Use & Activity)	2	2	0	0	1	3
Cultural (Use & Activity)	2	2	1	0	2	2
Diverse (Use & Activity)	4	1	0	0	3	2
Busy (Use & Activity)	3	1	0	0	0	5
Sustainable (Use & Activity)	2	3	0	0	2	2
Thriving (Use & Activity)	4	1	1	0	2	3
Safe (Comfort & Image)	6	0	1	0	6	0
Clean (Comfort & Image)	4	2	1	0	5	1
Green (Comfort & Image)	5	0	0	0	5	0
Sittable (Comfort & Image)	2	3	1	0	3	2
Charming (Comfort & Image)	3	2	1	0	4	2
Spiritual (Comfort & Image)	4	0	0	0	4	1
Bright (Comfort & Image)	1	2	0	0	2	4
Historic (Comfort & Image)	3	2	0	0	4	2

Open House Activity 2 - Energy

What type of energy should be explored in Northern Illinois? Instructions

Please place a sticker dot under the energy resource you would like to see scaled up, kept the same, or scaled down.

Energy Resources listed:

- Solar: Converts sunlight into electricity. Panels are often formed in an array placed on the ground or on roofs of buildings.
- Wind: Often in the form of turbines that use the motion of the wind to turn a shaft on a generator to make electricity.
- Geothermal: Heat pumps in the ground that use the temperature of the ground to transfer heat.
- Hydropower: Sometimes in a hydropower plant or a dam on a river, this source of power uses the motion of water to generate power.
- Biomass: Often derived from organic matter, such as plants (like burning wood in a fireplace.) A common example is ethanol produced by corn.
- Nuclear: Sustained nuclear fission to generate heat and electricity.
- Fossil Fuels: A natural fuel such as coal or gas. Burned to provide heat for use directly, to power engines, or to generate electricity.

Figure C-2: What type of energy should be explored in Northern Illinois? Activity Poster

What type of energy should be explored in Northern Illinois? Please place a sticker dot under the energy resource you would like to see scaled up, kept the same, or scaled down.			 Hydropower: Sometimes in a hydropower plant or a dam on a river, this source of power uses the motion of water to generate power.		
Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down	Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down
 Solar: Converts sunlight into electricity. Panels are often formed in an array placed on the ground or on roofs of buildings.			 Biomass: Often derived from organic matter, such as plants (like burning wood in a fireplace.) A common example is ethanol produced by corn.		
Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down	Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down
 Wind: Often in the form of turbines that use the motion of the wind to turn a shaft on a generator to make electricity.			 Nuclear: Sustained nuclear fission to generate heat and electricity.		
Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down	Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down
 Geothermal: Heat pumps in the ground that use the temperature of the ground to transfer heat.			 Fossil Fuels: A natural fuel such as coal or gas. Burned to provide heat for use directly, to power engines, or to generate electricity.		
Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down	Scale-Up	Keep the Same	Scale-Down

Open House Activity 3 - Health and Equity

Where do you go to get [...] ? Instructions

Place a red sticker dot on the area of the map where you get your groceries.

Place a green sticker dot on the area of the map where you get receive your Physical Health Care.

Place a yellow sticker dot on the area of the map where you receive your Mental Health Care.

Place a blue sticker dot on the area of the map where you receive your Dental Care.

Figure C-3: Winnebago County Map Activity Poster

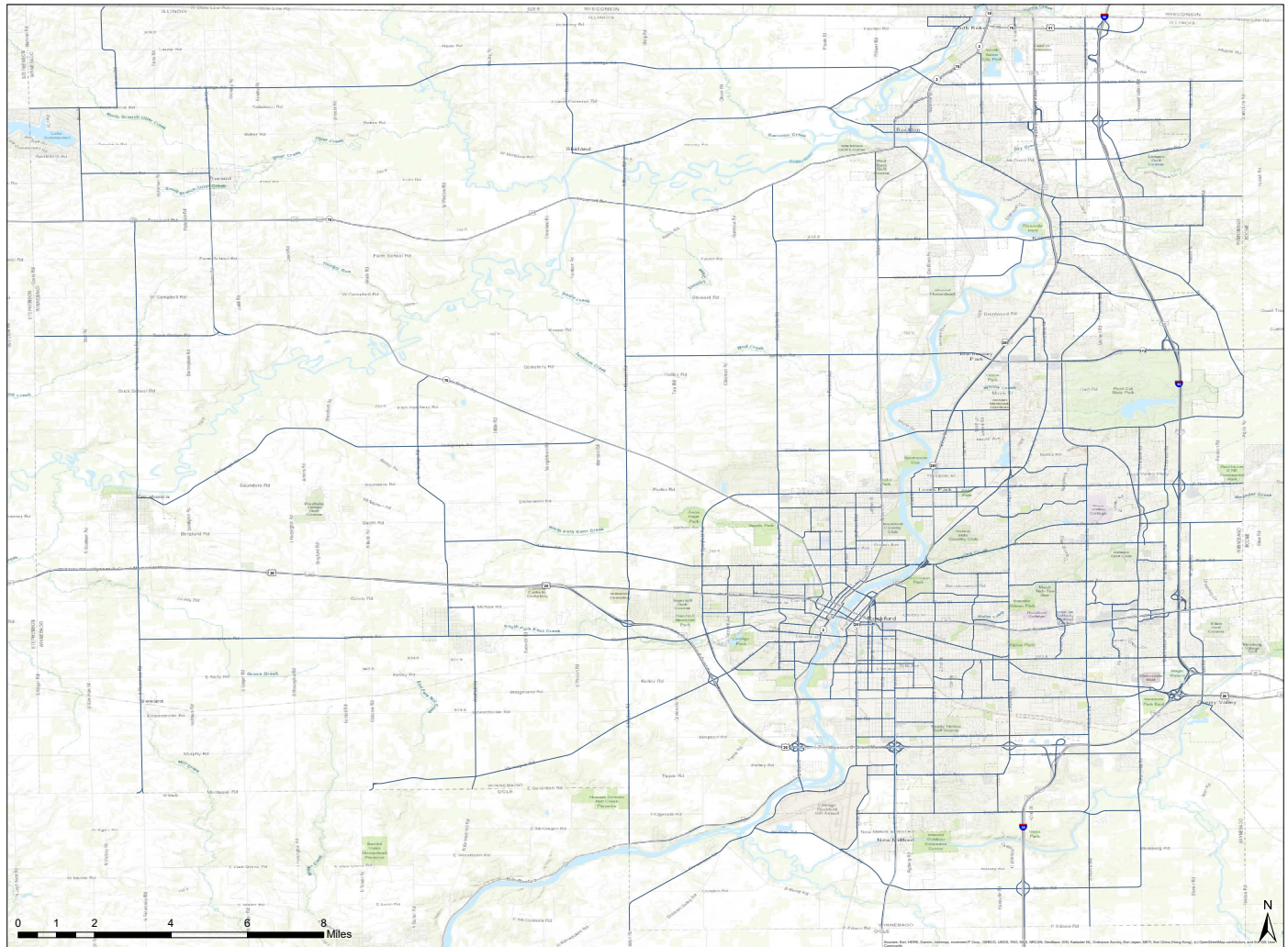
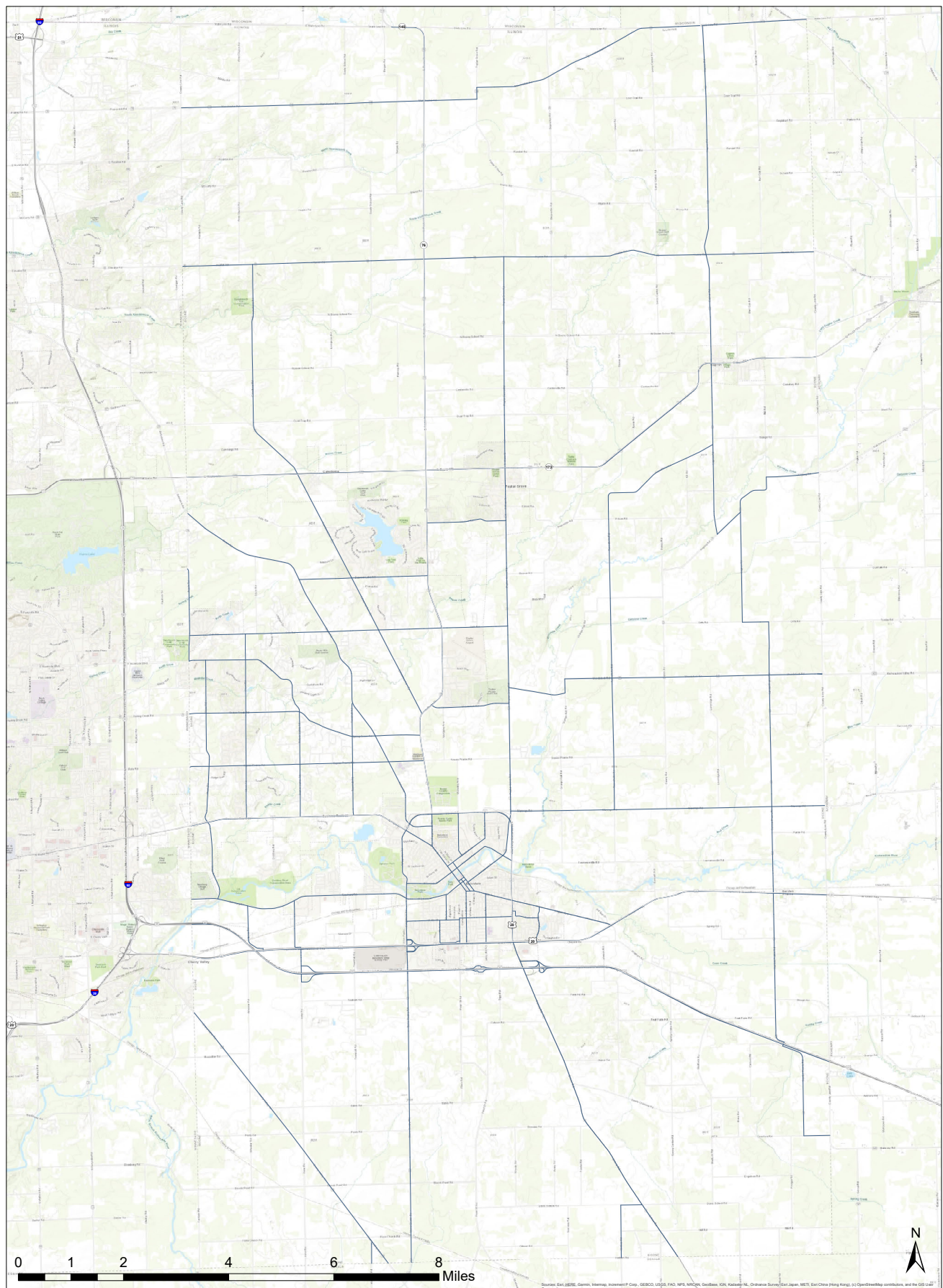


Figure C-4: Boone County Map Activity Poster



Appendix D. Round #1: Survey Results

Public Survey Results

Figure D-1: Public Survey Results - Question 1
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

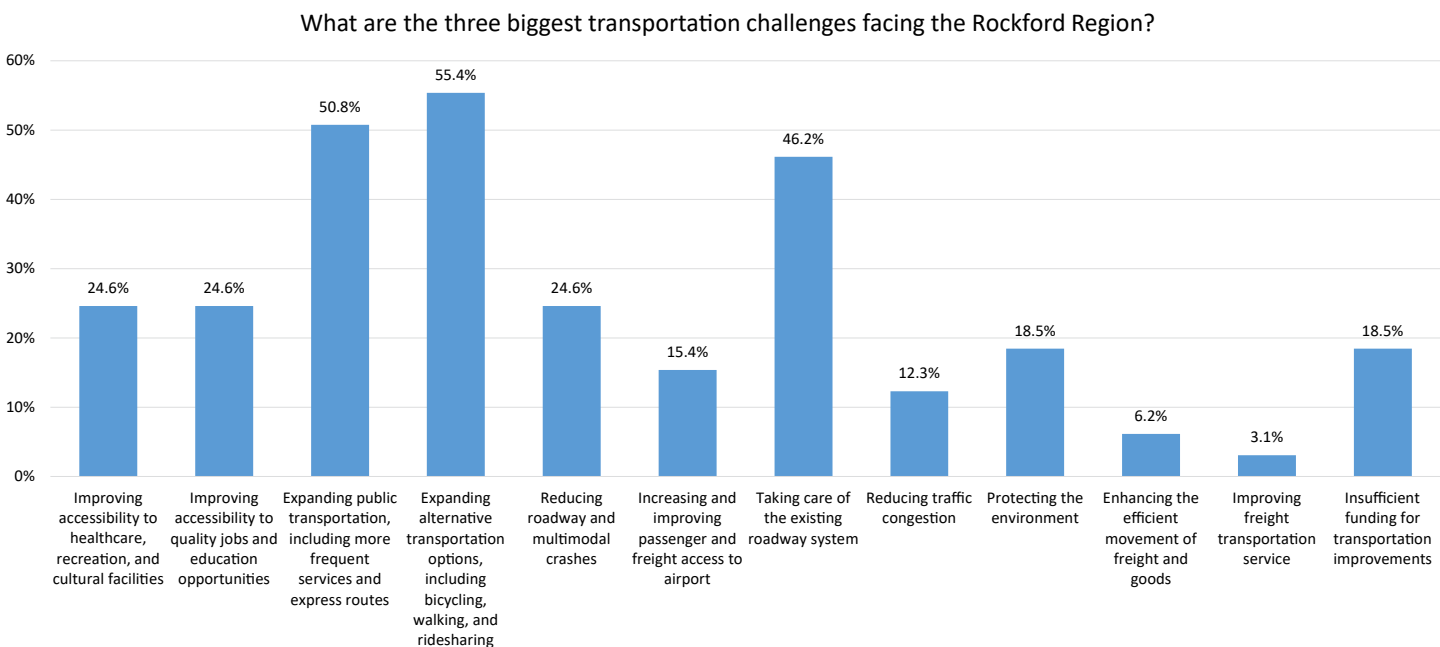


Figure D-2: Public Survey Results - Question 2
Matrix | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

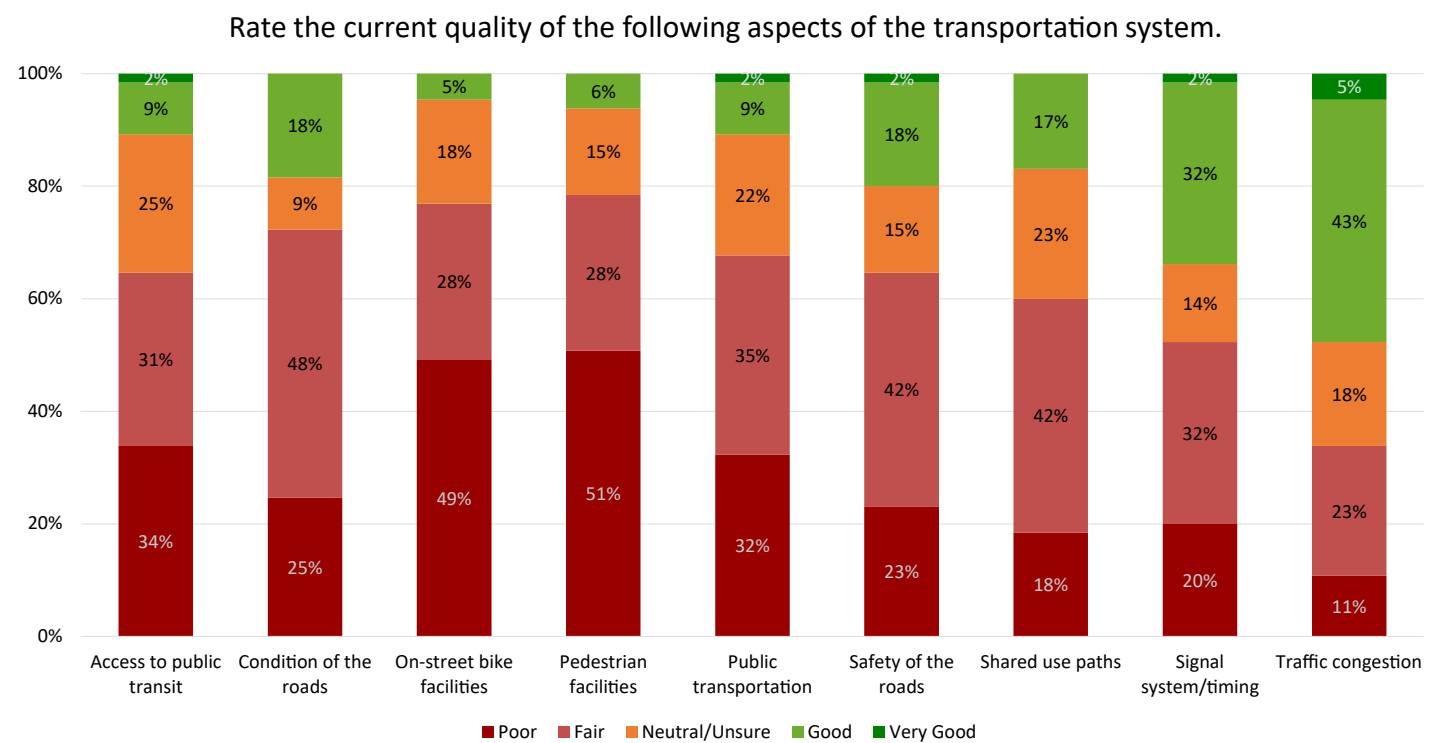


Figure D-3: Public Survey Results - Question 3

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

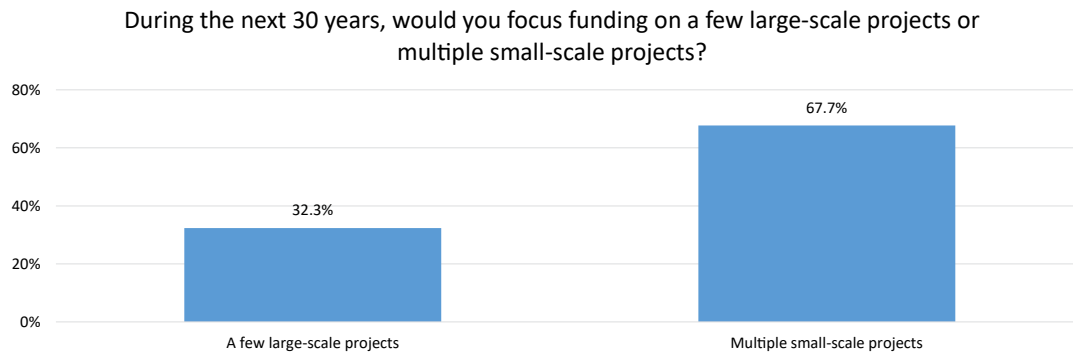


Figure D-4: Public Survey Results - Question 4

Ranking | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

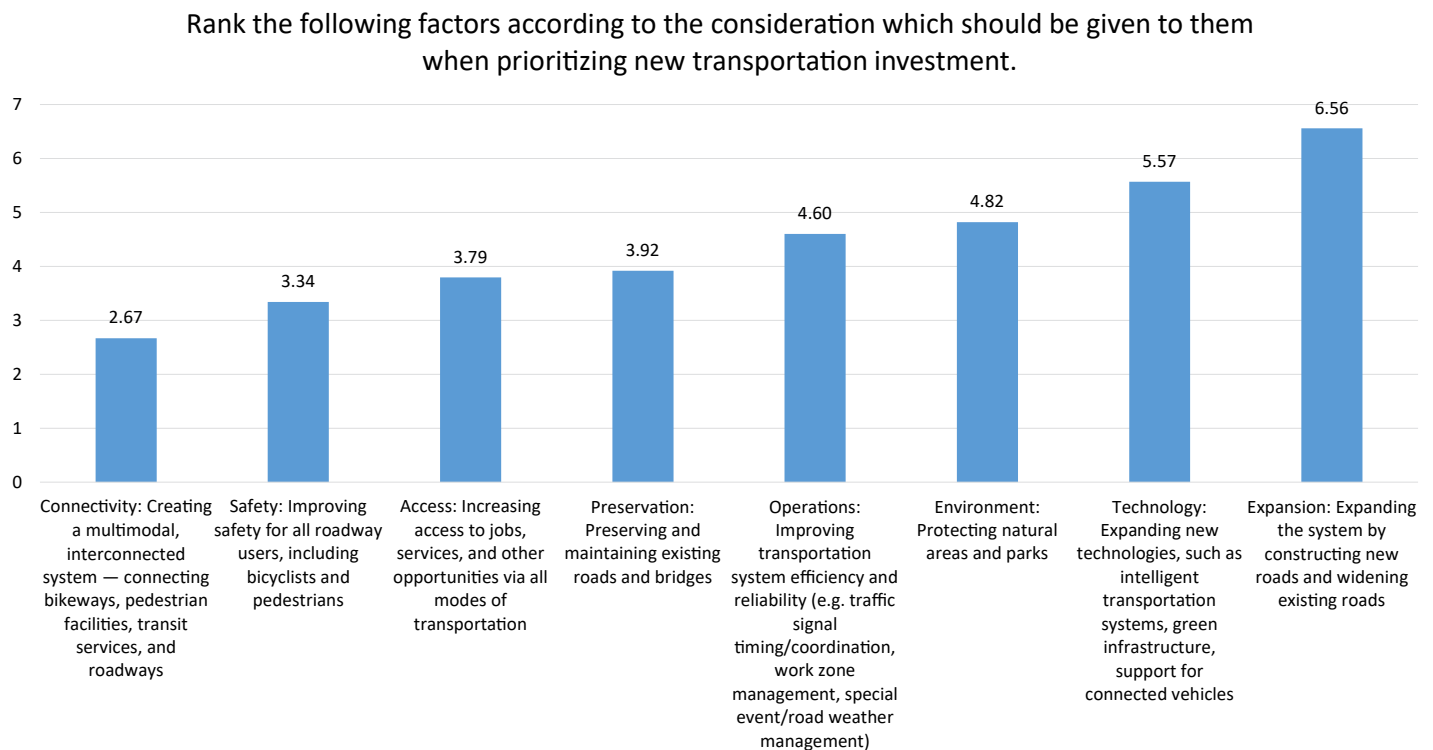


Figure D-5: Public Survey Results - Question 5

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

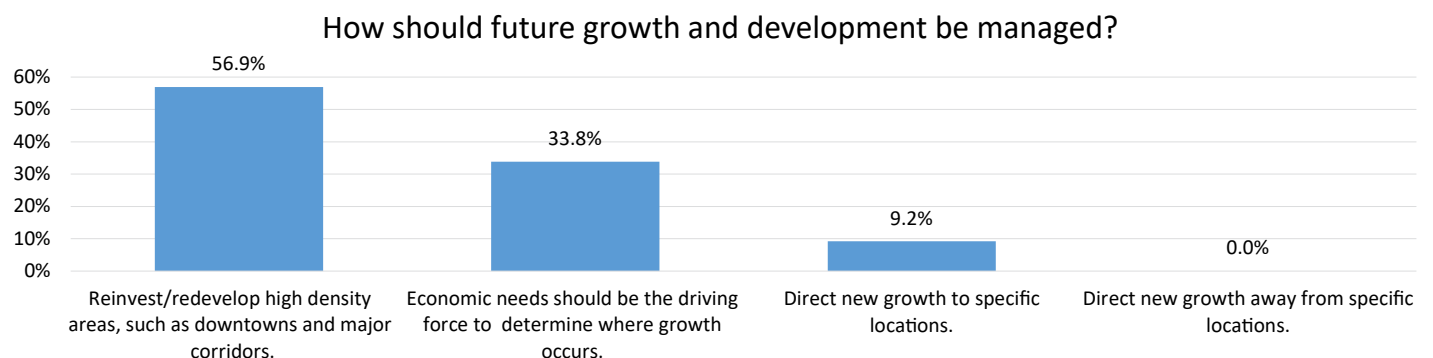


Figure D-6: Public Survey Results - Question 6

Short Text | Skipped: 60 | Answered: 5 (7.7%)

Please identify/describe the specific location(s) where future growth and development should be prioritized.
Absolutely NO TAX incentive or monetary bribes should ever be used to encourage development.
North Main, South Main, the west side
Investment in high poverty, high minority neighborhoods. Ie. the west side of Rockford. Make those neighborhoods nicer with decent amenities.
Metra to Chicago
Areas of maximum impact or areas that have been neglected. Undeserved neighborhoods, areas near schools or playgrounds and a major roadway to give safe travel options for families to get to the playground.

Figure D-7: Public Survey Results - Question 7

Short Text | Skipped: 65 | Answered: 0 (0%)

Please identify/describe the specific location(s) where future growth and development should be minimized.
No Responses

Figure D-8: Public Survey Results - Question 8

Matrix | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

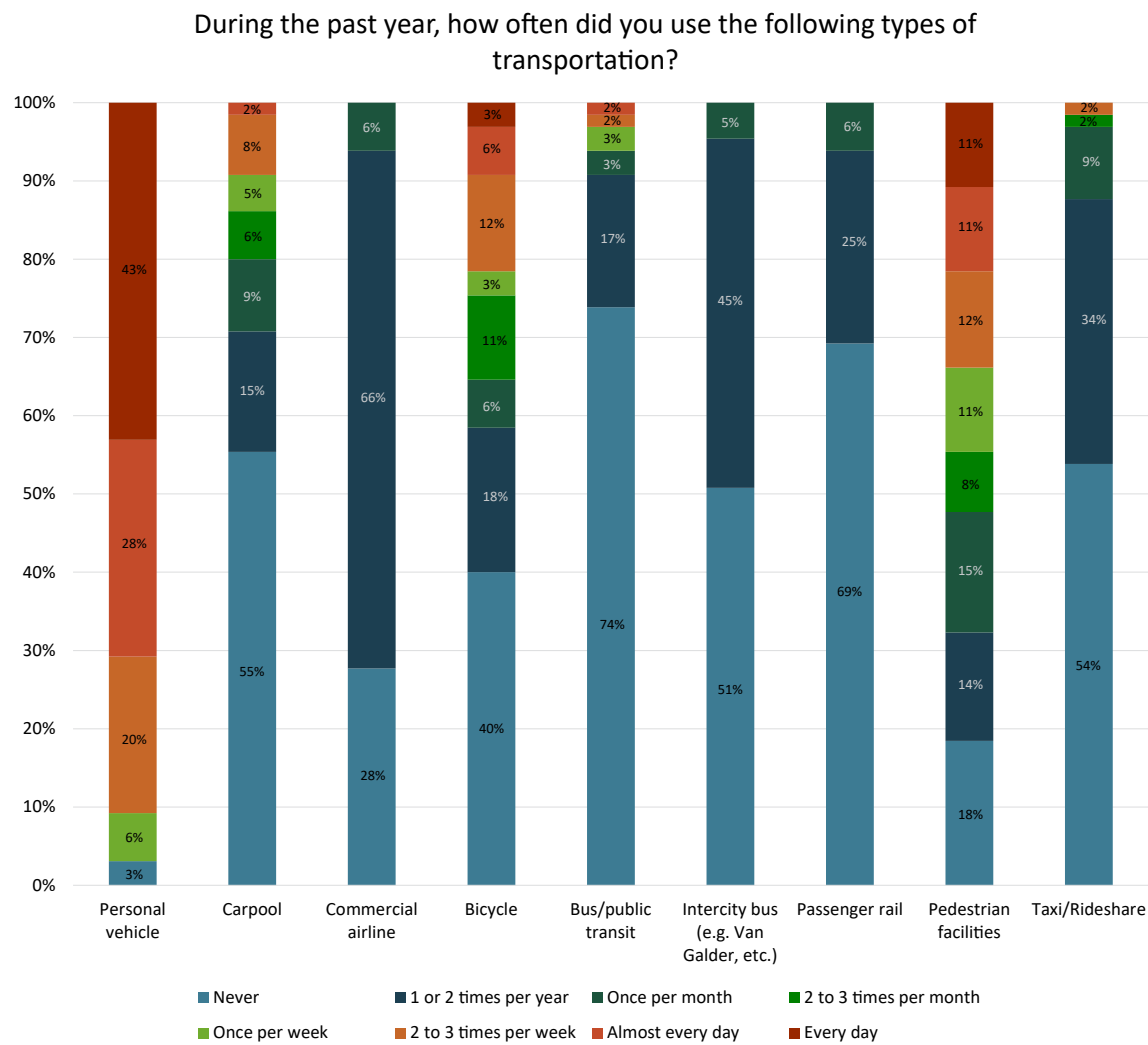


Figure D-9: Public Survey Results - Question 9

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

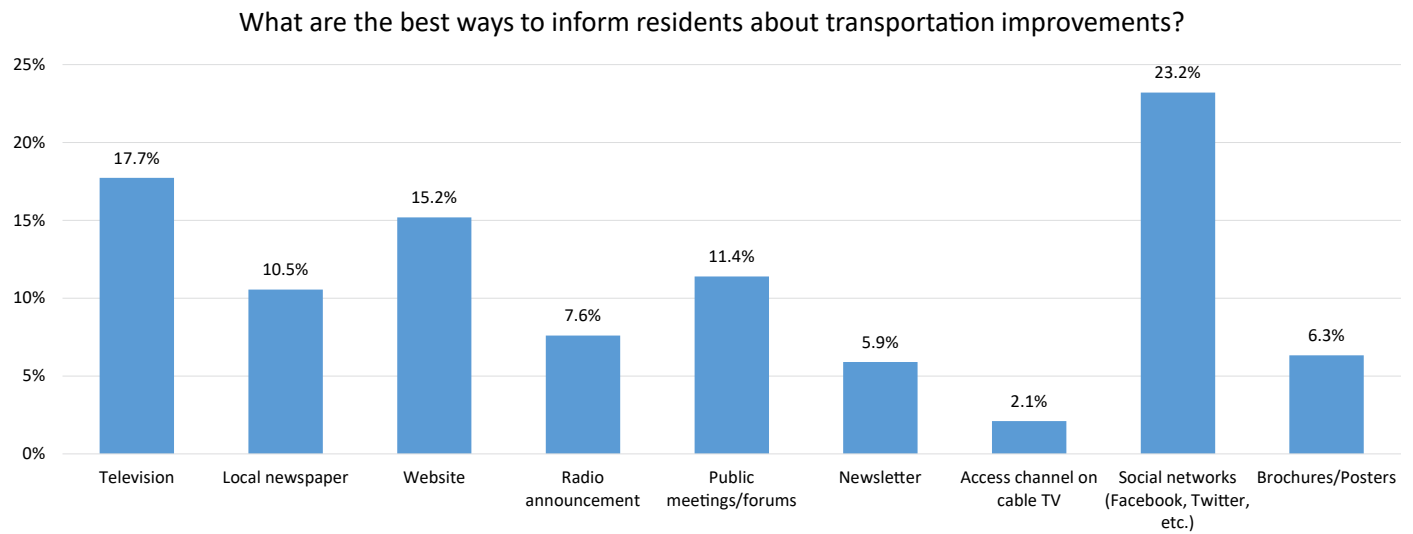


Figure D-10: Public Survey Results - Question 10

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)

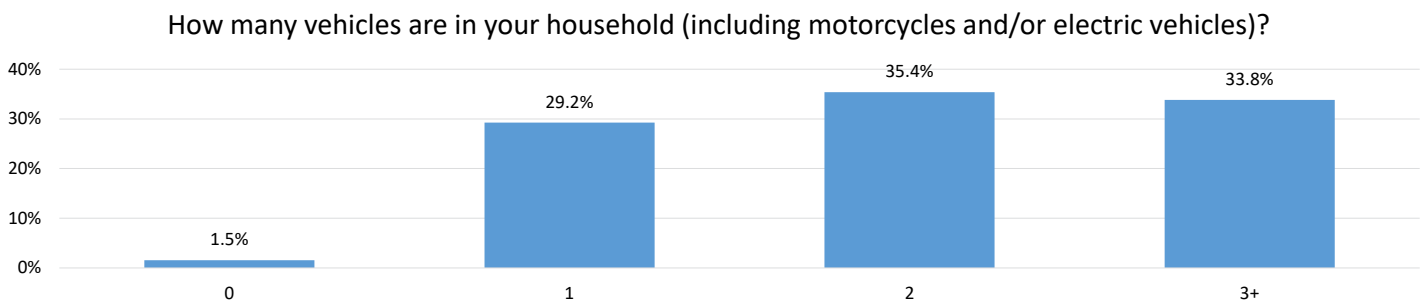
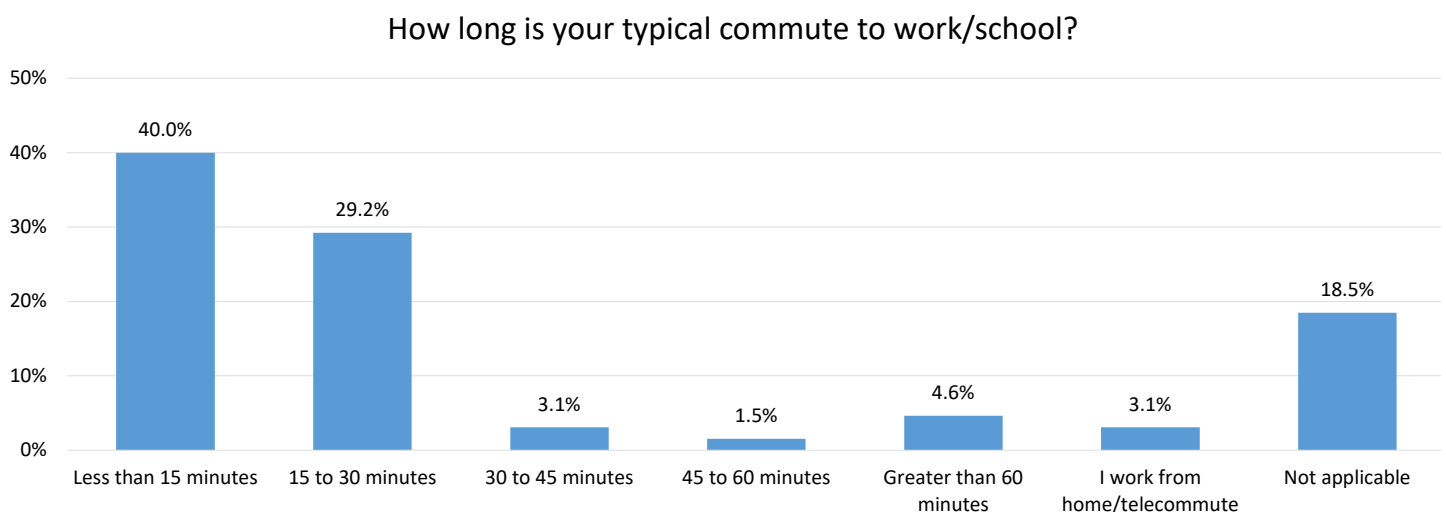


Figure D-11: Public Survey Results - Question 11

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 65 (100%)



FundIt Results

Figure D-12: FundIt Survey Results 1

This figure displays the average percentage of a respondent's funding that was allotted to each project.

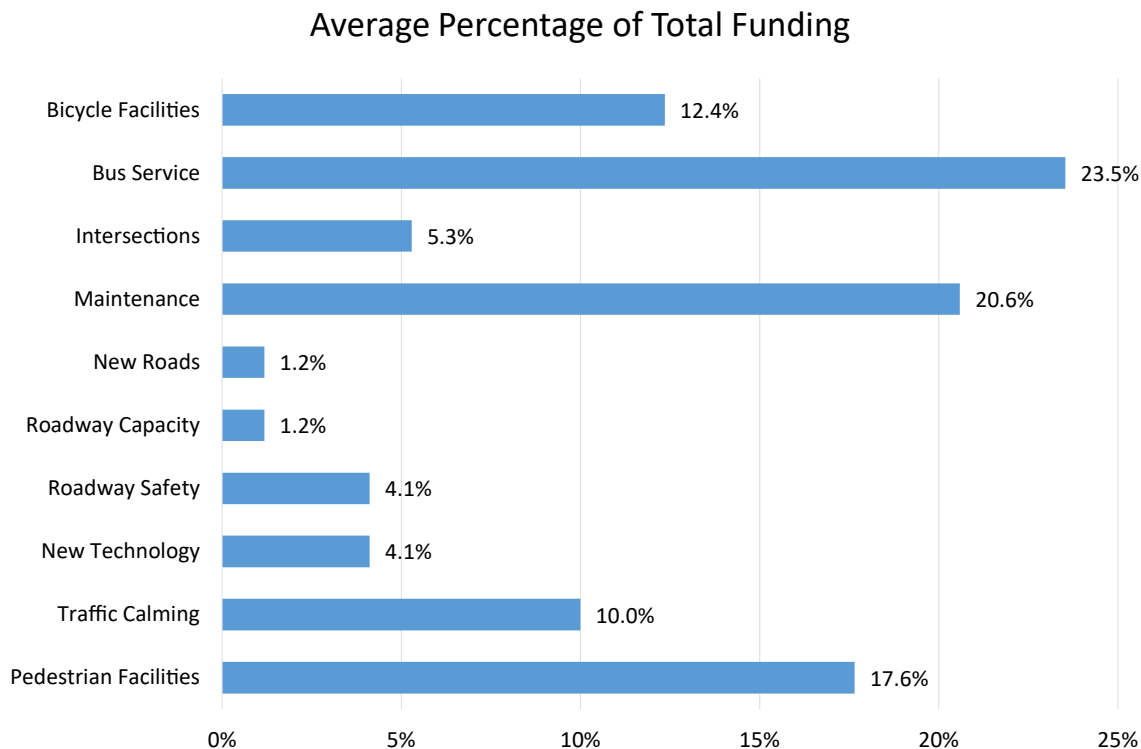
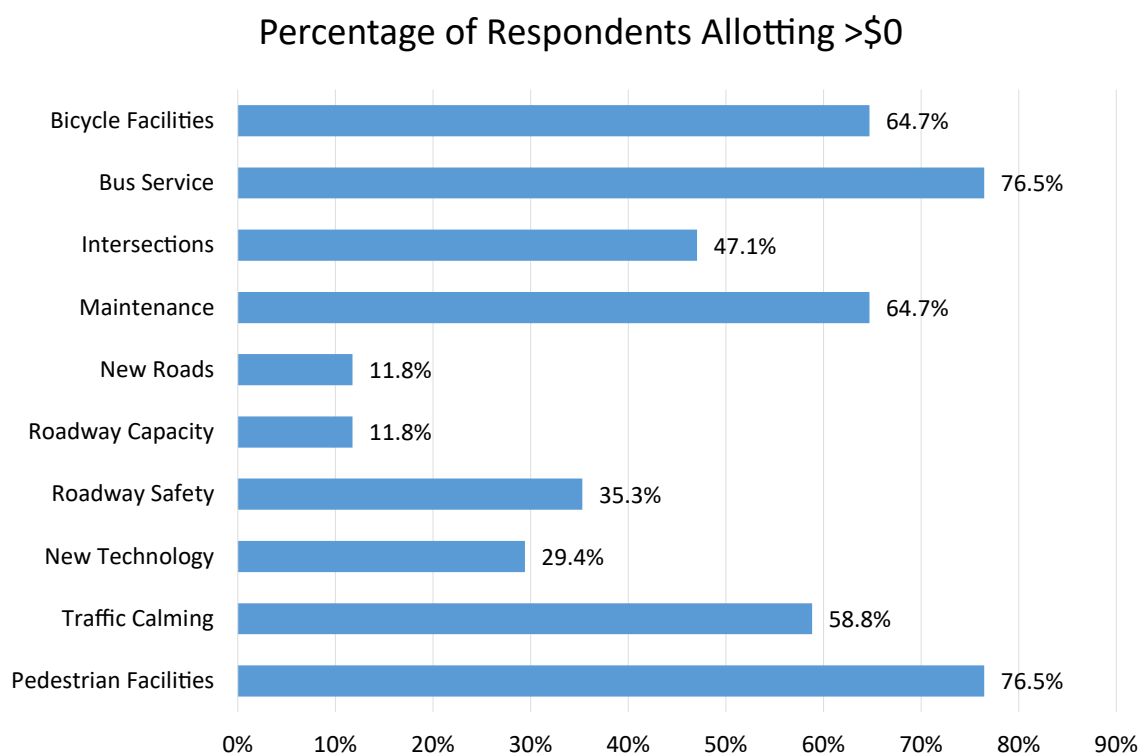


Figure D-13: FundIt Survey Results 2

This figure displays the average percentage of a respondents (17) who chose to fund each project (any dollar amount).



Appendix E. Round #1: Pop-up Results

Table E-1: Love/Change Poster Comments

What do you love about the Rockford Region?
Vibrant arts community
Summer music events
Inclusive development happening
Bike paths
Parks and preserves
Entertainment (Coronado, BMO Center, Ice Hogs)
Town history
Food x3
Events x2
Looks cleaner than you would expect
Parks, ponds, lakes
People advocating for change
Diversity of people x3
Diversity in buildings
YMCA
Parks x2
Lack of traffic
Easy to get around
Growth (slow)
Downtown and RPS
Social life
Sidewalks
People wanting to improve community x2
Safe traffic lights
RPS x2
Neighborhoods and convenience
Road networks
Rock Cut x2
Having a city
Safety
The signs seen in the forest

What would you change about the Rockford Region?
Road repairment
Transportation: Disperse transit funds appropriately
More acceptance & awareness to protect our planet
More bike lanes on busy streets
Buses & public transit serve larger areas
Recycling availability
Mitigate urban sprawl
More commercial shopping downtown
More bikeable streets outside downtown

What would you change about the Rockford Region?
Increased safety/reduced crime
Stormwater management (bio swales)
Recognize emissions from vehicles & combat them
More public places
More native plants
Groceries downtown
Crime rate
Daycare options
Lack of jobs
Pedestrian safety
Looks bland
Construction
Crime rate and protest
People who talk bad about other people
Crime x2
Economy
Biased people
Potholes
Structure
Experience needed for jobs when you don't have experience but have drive
Construction of new buildings and roads
Size is too small
Too much roads
Lack of nature
Lack of pedestrian sidewalks
Lack of interest from the community
Want wider bike lanes
Don't like traffic
Improve safety
Improve appearance of Rockford
Better roads x2
Signaled intersections
Plastic pollution
More bike lanes
Wider bike lanes
More roads
Less traffic accidents x2
Housing for the homeless
Safer streets
Better food in schools
Nowhere to bike
Fixing roads that don't really need fixing
Taxes seem very high

Appendix F. Round #2: Strategies Workshop Results

Winnebago County Workshop Results

Winnebago County | Region 1 Planning Council Offices | May 9, 2024

Figure F-1: Winnebago County Slides & Results

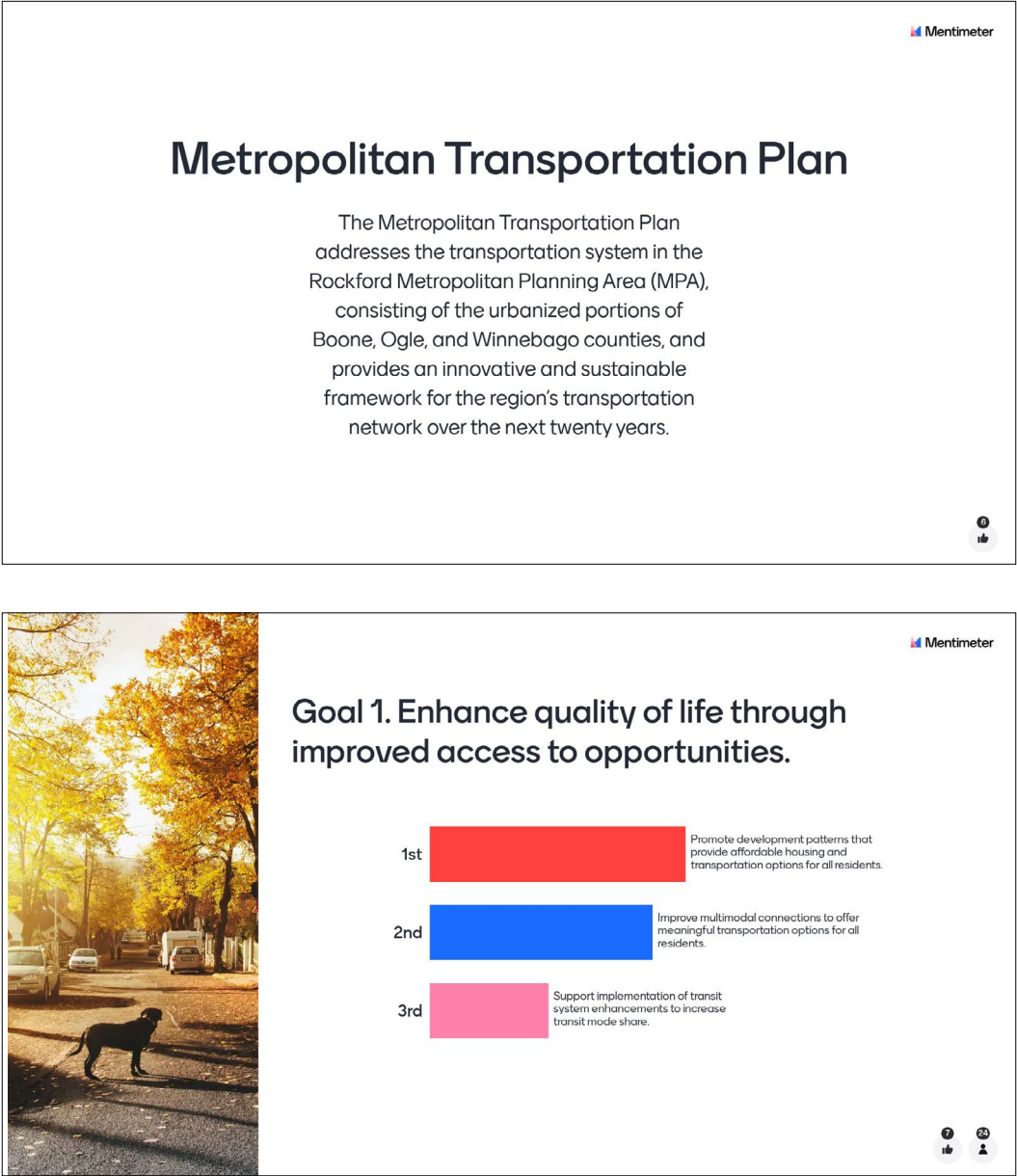
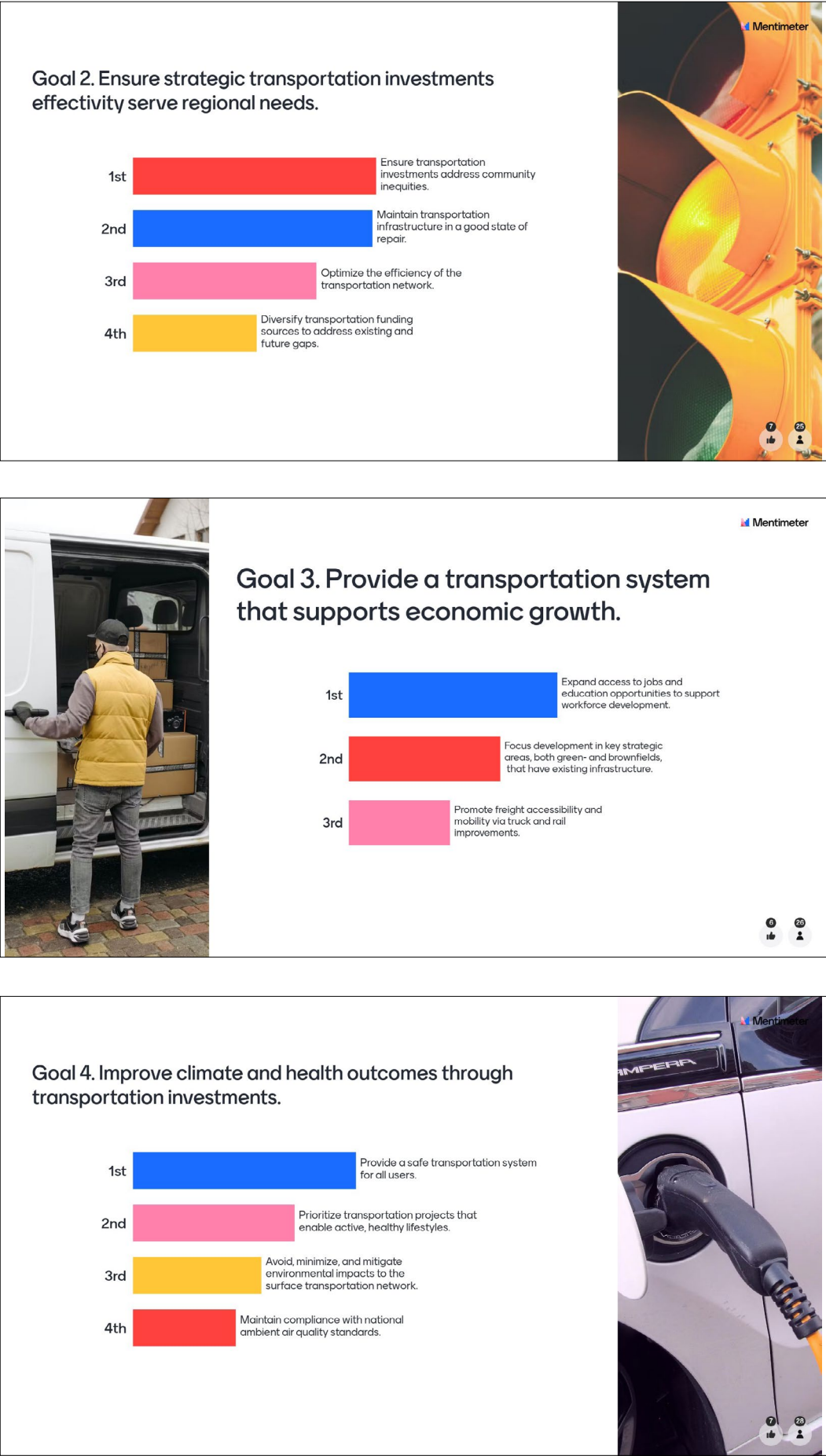


Figure F-2: Winnebago County Slides & Results



Boone County Workshop Results

Boone County | Community Complex of Boone County | May 21, 2024

Figure F-3: Boone County Slides & Results

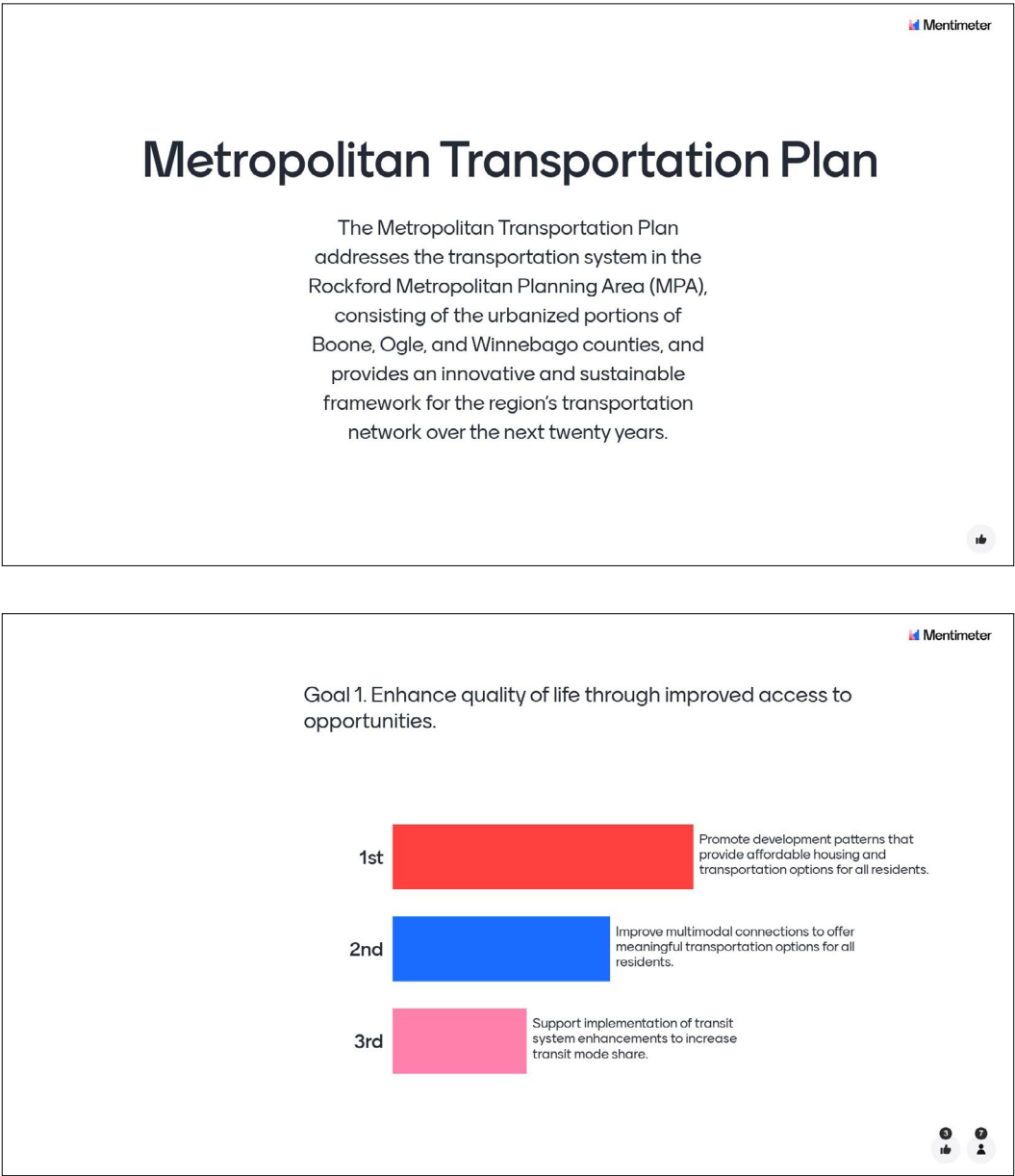
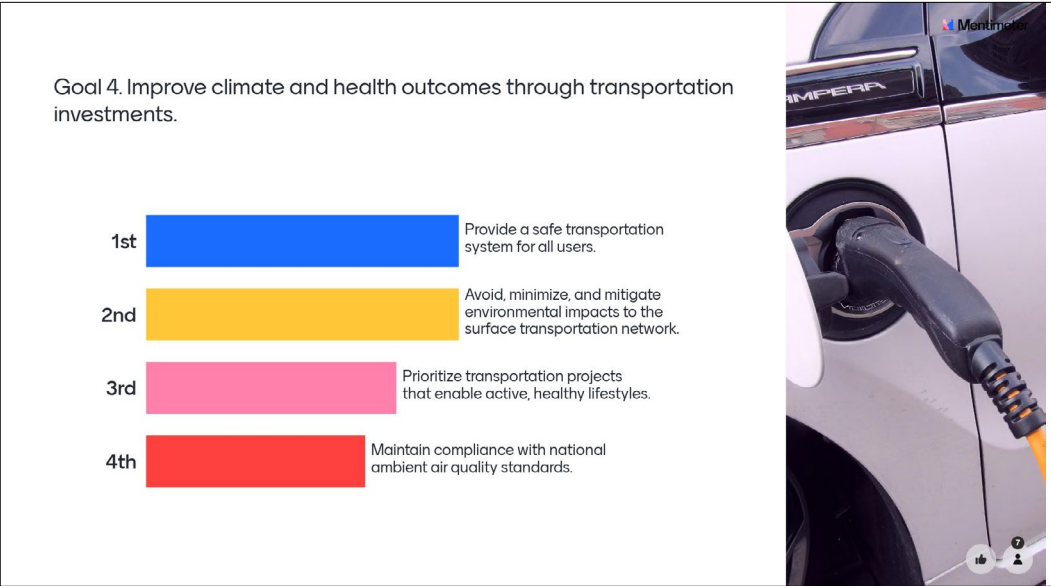
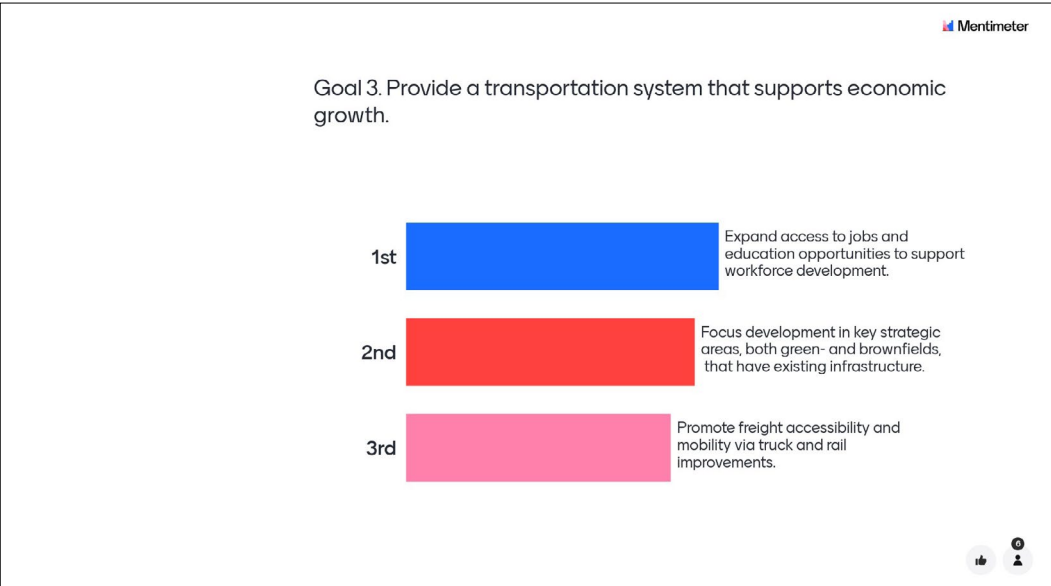
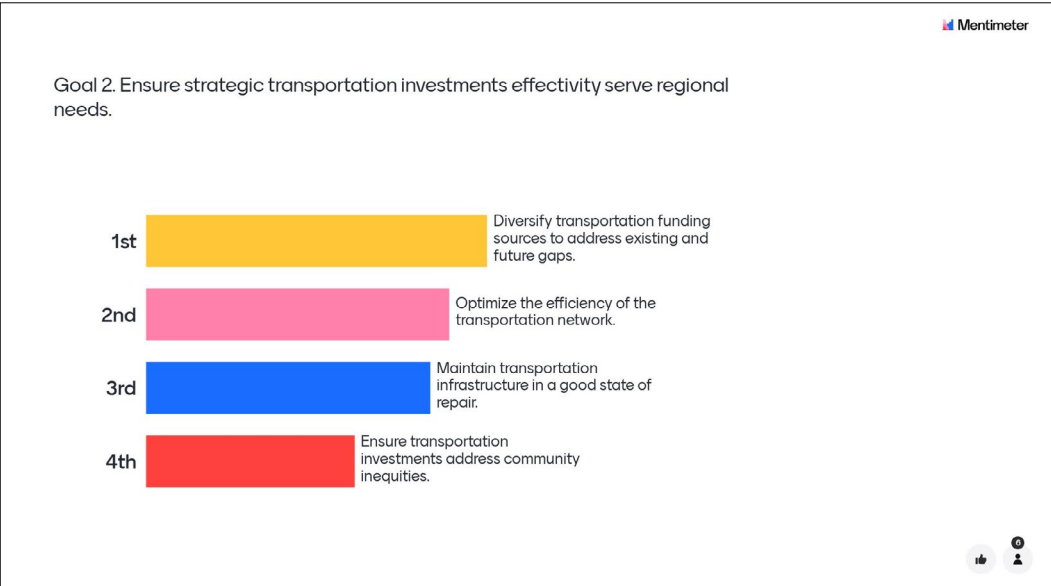


Figure F-4: Boone County Slides & Results



Appendix G. Round #2: Strategies Survey Results

Strategies Survey Results

Figure G-1: Strategies Survey Results - Question 1
Multi Choice | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 17 (94.4%)

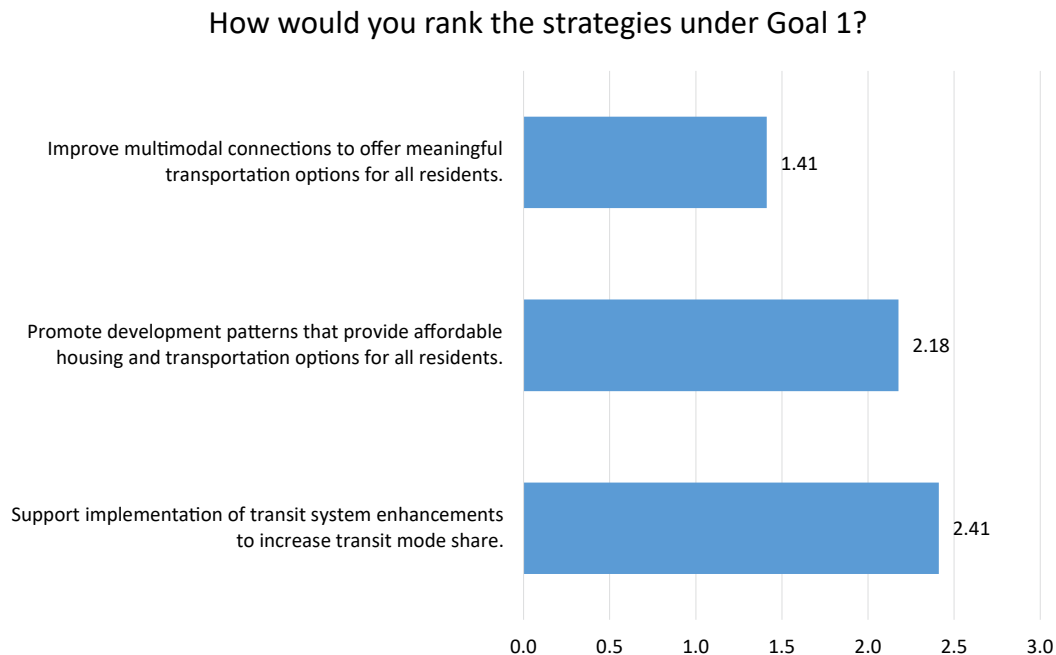


Figure G-2: Strategies Survey Results - Question 2
Long Text | Skipped: 12 | Answered: 6 (33.3%)

Does Goal 1 and its strategies align with the region's needs?
Would love redoing of I-90/39 Interchange
Yes
We need more and safer options for pedestrians and bikes. Our current infrastructure system is dangerous for anyone not in a car. Painting a bike symbol in the middle of a street doesn't make it a protected bike lane. We need protected, dedicated lanes for bikes and pedestrians.
Should consider current zoning and development regulations that make it difficult to implement or utilize transit or multi-modal options. Jobs and activities are often no co-located with adequate transit, and transit is often the last thought.
By having a multitude of transportation options, there is a greater chance that everyone will have access to opportunities.
I do not have any additions or changes.

Figure G-3: Strategies Survey Results - Question 3
Ranking | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 17 (94.4%)

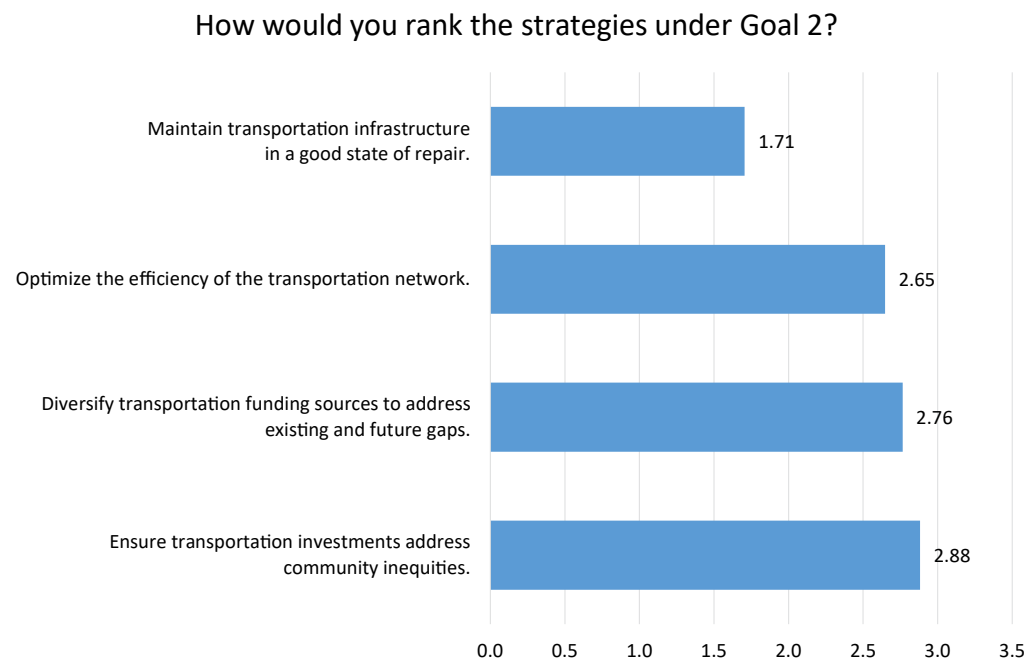


Figure G-4: Strategies Survey Results - Question 4
Long Text | Skipped: 12 | Answered: 6 (33.3%)

Does Goal 2 and its strategies align with the region's needs?
Public Transportation needs to prioritize being fast frequent and reliable. Development and investments need to have these necessary ties when planning.
Yes
Not everyone can afford the price of a car (initial cost, insurance, maintenance, gas). We need safe and attractive options for everyone.
I think that we need to work on fixing the roads to be built to last longer and not get destroyed as easily.
Yes, but they could be construed to not be helpful. Investments improving inequities should include improving sidewalks and regular transit options for people with disabilities, but could be construed to be adding more lanes and parking to access healthcare facilities which isn't what is needed.
Yes.

Figure G-5: Strategies Survey Results - Question 5

Ranking | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 17 (94.4%)

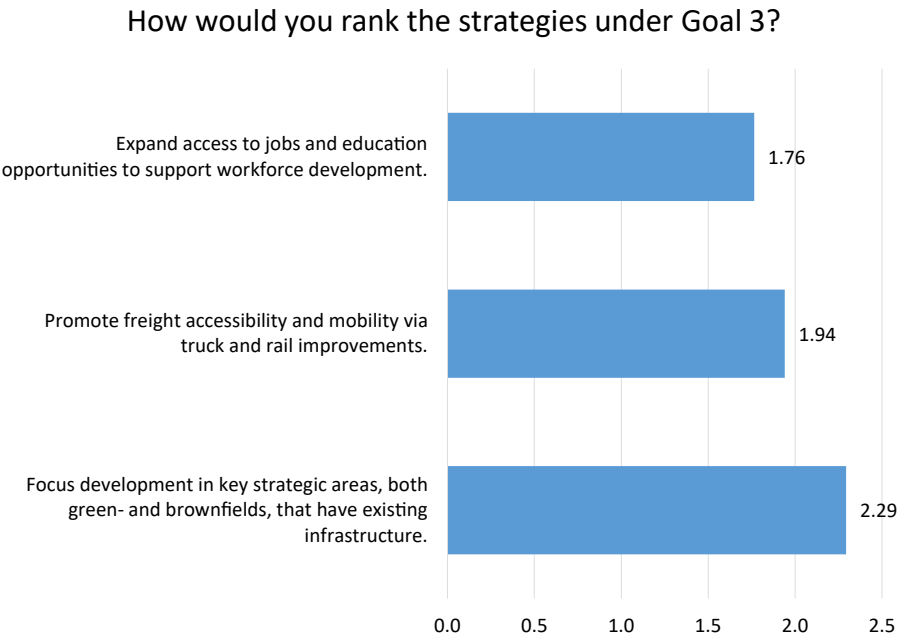


Figure G-6: Strategies Survey Results - Question 6

Long Text | Skipped: 13 | Answered: 5 (27.8%)

Does Goal 3 and its strategies align with the region's needs?
Systems should prioritize already development areas. Priority should be taken with the climate plan, green fields should not be utilized for transportation development, unless they are existing agricultural fields.
Yes
We need rail transportation! It should connect to Chicago, but also throughout Illinois and into neighboring states.
separating transportation and freight infrastructure would be helpful for economic growth. For example, running intercity rail on dedicated ROW (that is capable of running at 120mph+) will both induce demand for people to live in the area due to faster commutes AND allow for freight rail to be used to move more freight, especially if connected to RFD without needing to use as many trucks.
Yes.

Figure G-7: Strategies Survey Results - Question 7

Ranking | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 17 (94.4%)

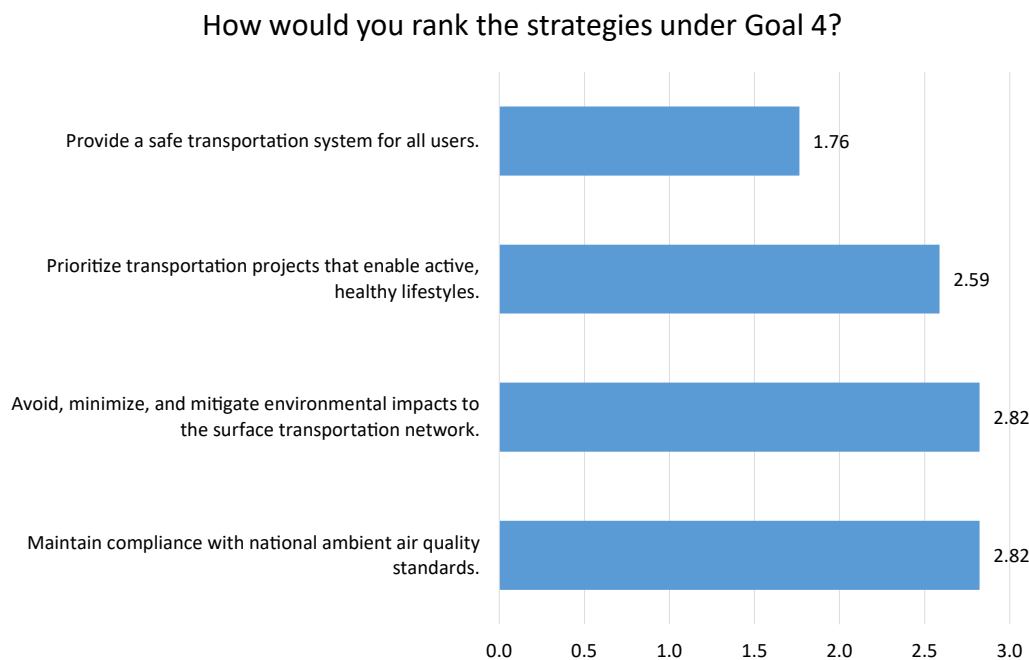


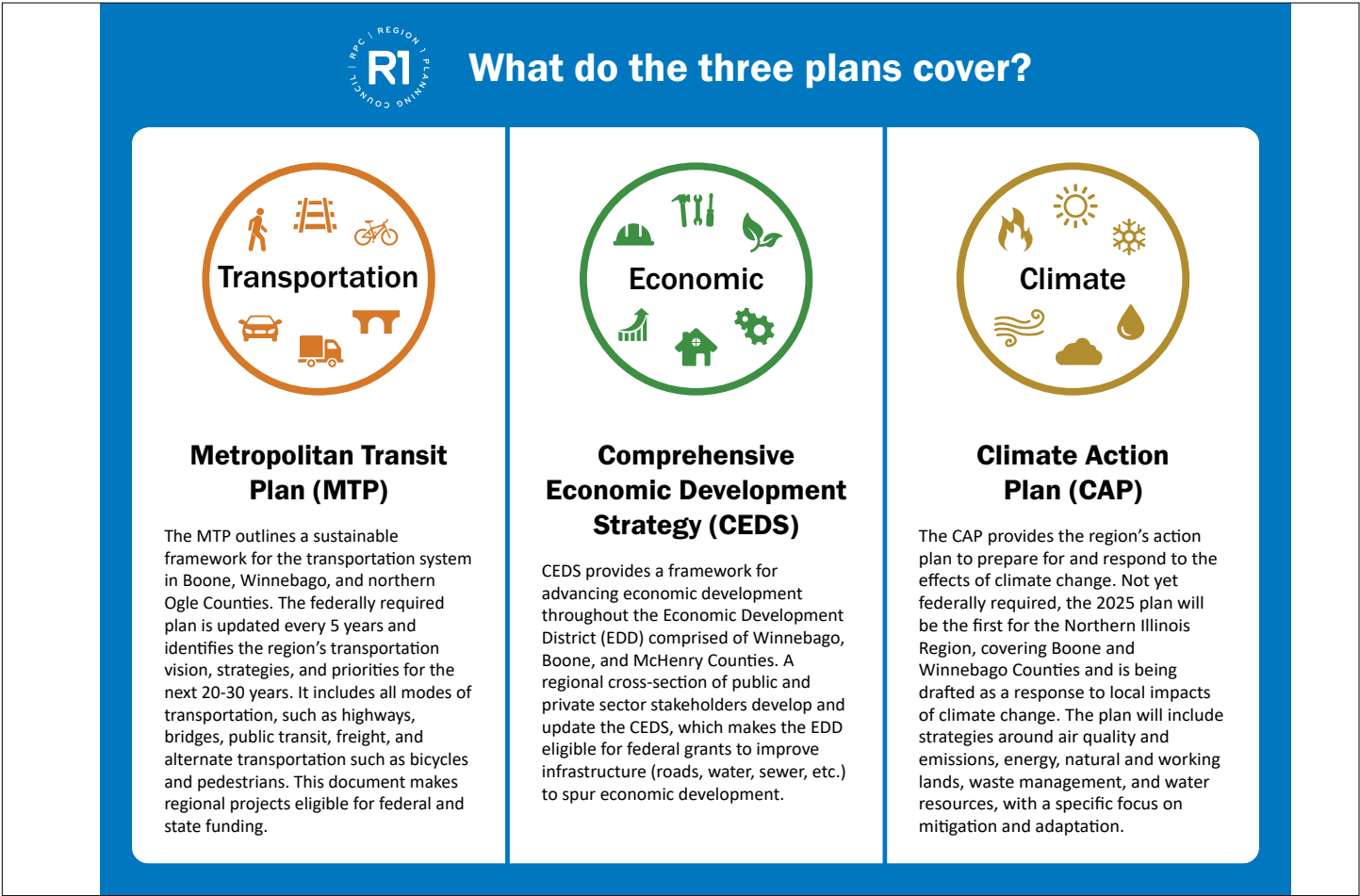
Figure G-8: Strategies Survey Results - Question 8

Long Text | Skipped: 14 | Answered: 4 (22.2%)

Does Goal 4 and its strategies align with the region's needs?
Yes
A healthy community is one that embraces walking and biking. There should be accessible shops, restaurants, medical offices, and grocery within walking distance to encourage getting outside and meeting others while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. No one travels to a city to look at their streets- they come to see a vibrant, walkable, safe city.
Yes, but it could be construed to invite investment in ways that is not beneficial in the long-term. Electric trucks using catenary power on I90 is not good for the environment, as it would create more microplastic pollution. Instead transportation investments should be inducing demand like improved freight rail infrastructure, SAF production and distribution, and maybe even something like light rail in primary corridors. State St and IL-251 would probably be decent light rail corridors if cars weren't given priority over people. New developments are making it more and more difficult to make any changes/improvements in the future.
I prefer focus on a myraid of public transportation options, i.e. air, rail and bicycle.

Appendix H. Round #2: Pop-Up Materials

Figure H-1: Three Plans Overview Poster



What do the three plans cover?

Transportation: Metropolitan Transit Plan (MTP)

The MTP outlines a sustainable framework for the transportation system in Boone, Winnebago, and northern Ogle Counties. The federally required plan is updated every 5 years and identifies the region's transportation vision, strategies, and priorities for the next 20-30 years. It includes all modes of transportation, such as highways, bridges, public transit, freight, and alternate transportation such as bicycles and pedestrians. This document makes regional projects eligible for federal and state funding.

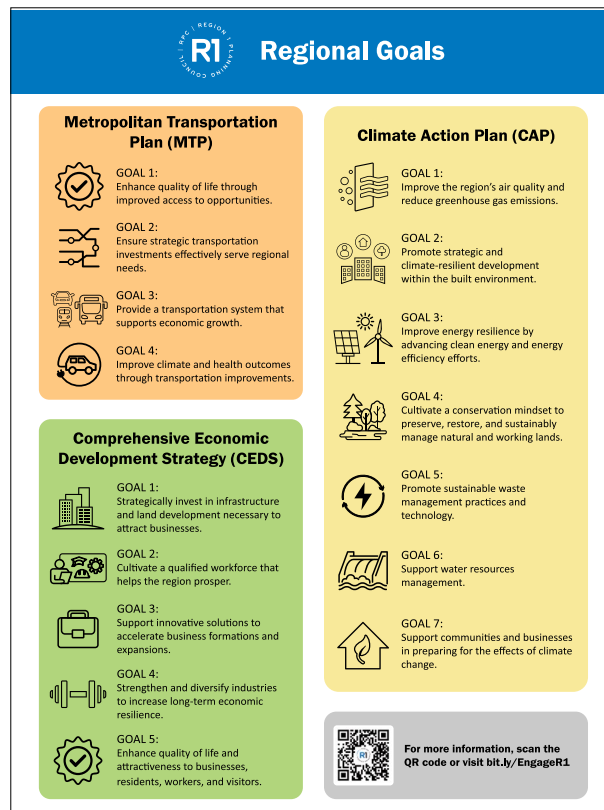
Economic: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

CEDS provides a framework for advancing economic development throughout the Economic Development District (EDD) comprised of Winnebago, Boone, and McHenry Counties. A regional cross-section of public and private sector stakeholders develop and update the CEDS, which makes the EDD eligible for federal grants to improve infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) to spur economic development.

Climate: Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The CAP provides the region's action plan to prepare for and respond to the effects of climate change. Not yet federally required, the 2025 plan will be the first for the Northern Illinois Region, covering Boone and Winnebago Counties and is being drafted as a response to local impacts of climate change. The plan will include strategies around air quality and emissions, energy, natural and working lands, waste management, and water resources, with a specific focus on mitigation and adaptation.

Figure H-2: Three Plans Goals Poster



Regional Goals

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

- Goal 1: Enhance quality of life through improved access to opportunities.
- Goal 2: Ensure strategic transportation investments effectively serve regional needs.
- Goal 3: Provide a transportation system that supports economic growth.
- Goal 4: Improve climate and health outcomes through transportation improvements.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

- Goal 1: Strategically invest in infrastructure and land development necessary to attract businesses.
- Goal 2: Cultivate a qualified workforce that helps the region prosper.
- Goal 3: Support innovative solutions to accelerate business formations and expansions.
- Goal 4: Strengthen and diversify industries to increase long-term economic resilience.
- Goal 5: Enhance quality of life and attractiveness to businesses, residents, workers, and visitors.

Climate Action Plan (CAP)

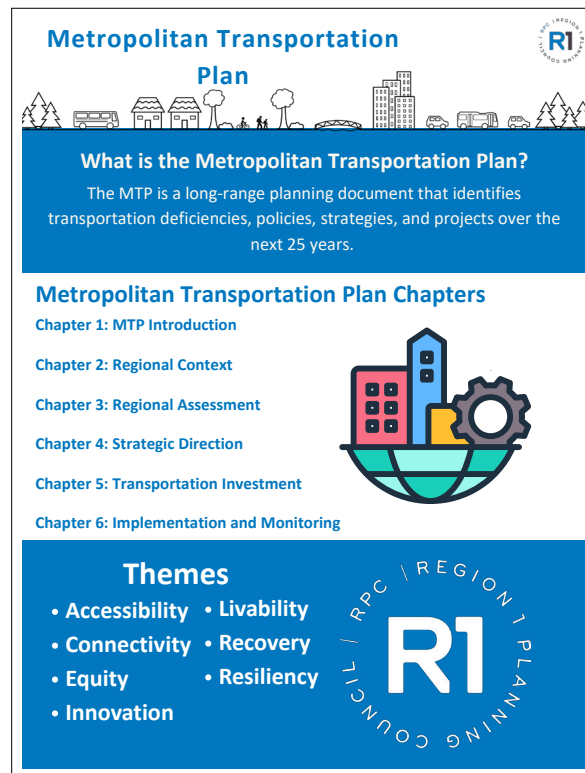
- Goal 1: Improve the region's air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Goal 2: Promote strategic and climate-resilient development within the built environment.
- Goal 3: Improve energy resilience by advancing clean energy and energy efficiency efforts.
- Goal 4: Cultivate a conservation mindset to preserve, restore, and sustainably manage natural and working lands.
- Goal 5: Promote sustainable waste management practices and technology.
- Goal 6: Support water resources management.
- Goal 7: Support communities and businesses in preparing for the effects of climate change.

For more information, scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/EngageR1

Appendix I. Round #3: Open House Materials

MTP Open House Posters

Figure I-1: MTP Overview Poster



What is the Metropolitan Transportation Plan?

The MTP is long-range planning document that identifies transportation deficiencies, policies, strategies, and project over the next 25 years.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Chapters

Chapter 1: MTP Introduction

Chapter 2: Regional Context

Chapter 3: Regional Assessment

Chapter 4: Strategic Direction

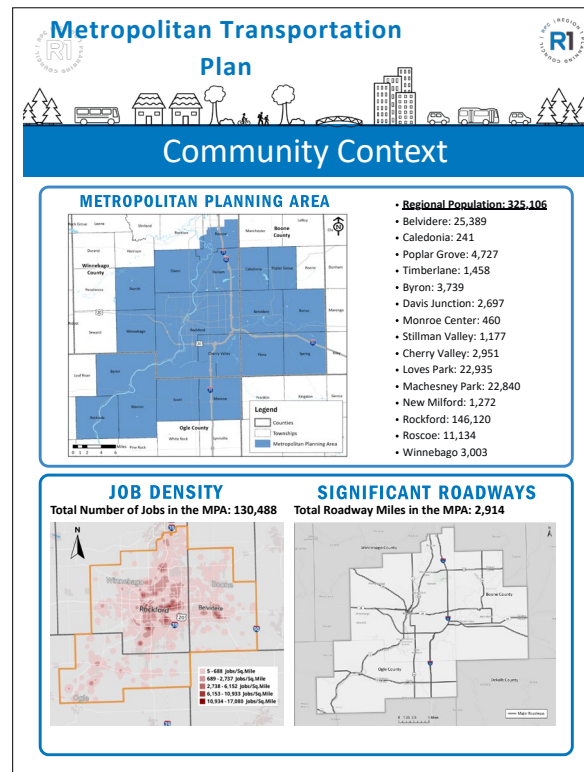
Chapter 5: Transportation Investment

Chapter 6: Implementation and Monitoring

Themes

- Accessibility
- Connectivity
- Equity
- Innovation
- Livability
- Recovery
- Resiliency

Figure I-2: MTP Community Context Poster



Community Context

Metropolitan Planning Area

- **Regional Population: 325,106**
- Belvidere: 25,389
- Caledonia: 241
- Poplar Grove: 4,727
- Timberlane: 1,458
- Byron: 3,739
- Davis Junction: 2,697
- Monroe Center: 460
- Stillman Valley: 1,177
- Cherry Valley: 2,951
- Loves Park: 22,935
- Machesney Park: 22,840
- New Milford: 1,272
- Rockford: 146,120
- Roscoe: 11,134
- Winnebago: 3,003

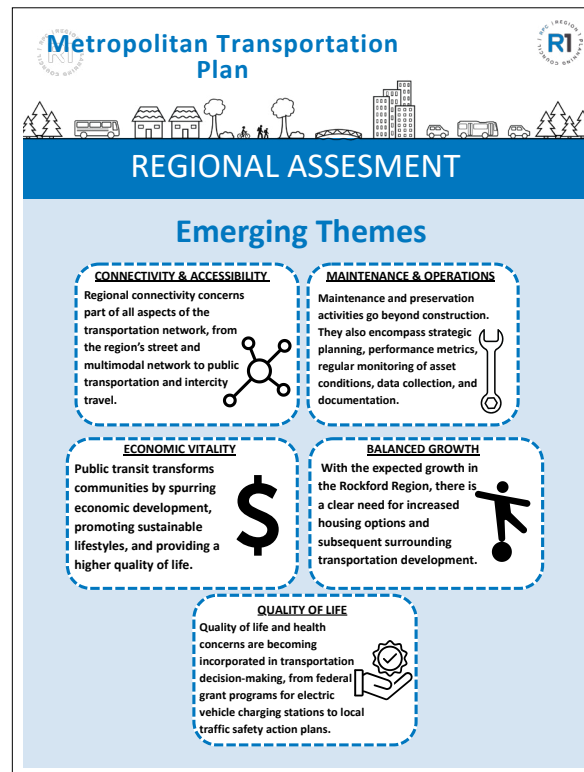
Job Density

Total Number of Jobs in the MPA: 130,488

Significant Roadways

Total Roadway Miles in the MPA: 2,914

Figure I-3: MTP Regional Assessment Poster



Regional Assessment

Emerging Themes

Connectivity & Accessibility

Regional connectivity concerns part of all aspects of the transportation network, from the region's street and multimodal network to public transportation and intercity travel.

Maintenance & Operations

Maintenance and preservation activities go beyond construction. They also encompass strategic planning, performance metrics, regular monitoring of asset conditions, data collection, and documentation.

Economic Vitality

Public transit transforms communities by spurring economic development, promoting sustainable lifestyles, and providing a higher quality of life.

Balanced Growth

With the expected growth in the Rockford Region, there is a clear need for increased housing options and subsequent surrounding transportation development.

Quality of Life

Quality of life and health concerns are becoming incorporated in transportation decision-making, from federal grant programs for electric vehicle charging stations to local safety action plans.

Figure I-4: MTP Strategic Direction Poster

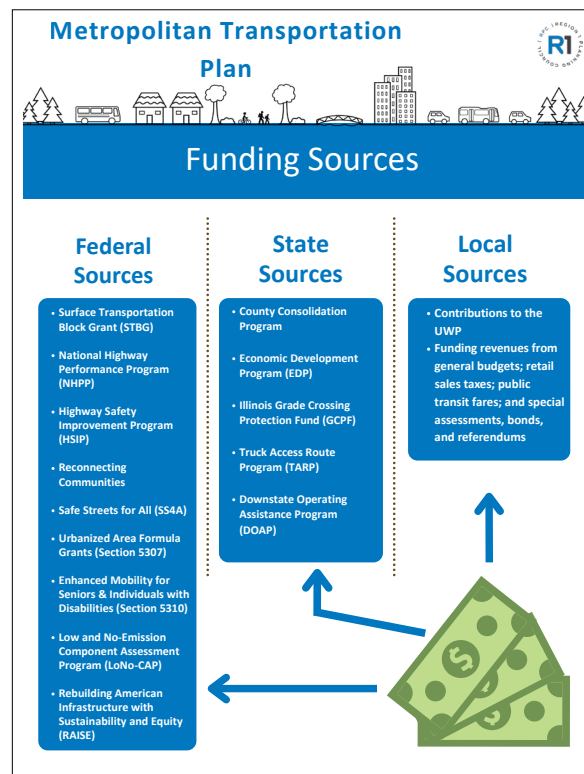


Strategic Direction

Regional Goals

1. Enhance Quality of Life with Improved Access to Opportunities: Promote the development of diverse transit modes to provide affordable housing and transportation options across the region.
2. Ensure Strategic Transportation Investment Serve Regional Needs: Strategically collect and distribute funding for projects that maintain and enhance the regional transportation system
3. Provide a Transportation System to Support Economic Growth: Develop a transportation system that supports the economic growth of the region through diverse transportation options.
4. Improve climate and health through transportation investments: Develop resilient and healthy transportation solutions for immediate threats that put the region's transportation system at risk.

Figure I-5: MTP Funding Sources Poster



Funding Sources

Federal Sources

- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Reconnecting Communities
- Safe Streets for All (SS4A)
- Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307)
- Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)
- Low and No-Emission Component Assessment Program (LoNo-CAP)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

State Sources

- County Consolidation Program
- Economic Development Program (EDP)
- Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF)
- Truck Access Route Program (TARP)
- Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP)

Local Sources

- Contributions to the UWP
- Funding revenues from general budgets; retail sales tax; public transit fares; and special assessments, bonds, and referendums

Figure I-6: MTP Additional Planning Efforts Poster



Additional Planning Efforts

Special Studies

Special studies published by the MPO present information on a specific topic that was noted in the MTP or identified as an emerging opportunity.

- Bus Stop Accessibility & Safety Assessment
- Regional Transportation Equity Audit
- Connected & Autonomous Vehicle Infrastructure Improvement Study
- State of the Trails Report
- Road Safety Audits
- Food Access & Transportation Study

Program & Modal Plans

The goal of the MPOs programmed modal plans is to provide a strategic framework and specific tactics for a specific component of the transportation system.

- Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
- Greenways Plan
- Human Service Transportation Plan
- Public Participation Plan
- Transportation Systems Management & Operations Plan
- Regional Safety Action Plan
- Resiliency Improvement Plan
- Green Streets Plan

Scenario Planning

Scenario planning helps frame the future in terms of multiple scenarios that may occur over the next 10 to 25 years. The emerging housing market and new regional manufacturing partners will be part of future MPO planning.

Figure I-7: MTP Overview Handout



FY 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

About

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a federally required, long-range transportation plan that looks 25 years into the future. It is developed by Region 1 Planning Council (R1) to guide transportation decisions for their respective regions.

The MTP addresses all forms of transportation - including major roads, public transit, rail, walking and biking paths, and multimodal connections - to ensure a well-integrated, connected system for today and the future.

The plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the MPO, local governments, transit providers, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and input from the public.

Purpose

This plan outlines a strategic vision for developing a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system for the Rockford Region. Built on a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) planning process, the goal is to create a multi-modal network that serves our community while minimizing impacts on taxpayers, society, and the environment.

The MTP prioritizes and plans transportation related projects to the year 2050. The plan forecasts upcoming trends and issues to better prepare the region for the transportation challenges and needs of the future.

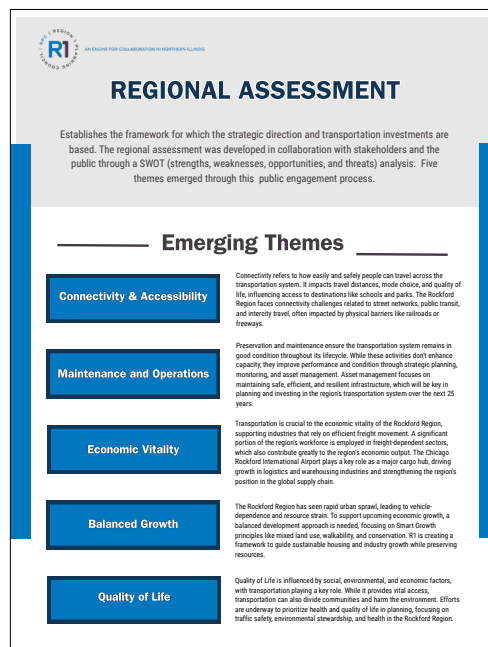
Special Studies (Over the next 5 years)

- Bus Stop Accessibility and Safety Assessment
- Regional Transportation Equity Audit
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV)
- Infrastructure Improvement Study
- State of the Trails Report
- Road Safety Audits, and
- Food Access and transportation Study.

Programs and Modal Plans (Over the next 5 years)

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Greenways Plan
- Human Service Transportation Plan
- Public Participation Plan
- Transportation Systems Management and Operations Plan
- Regional Safety Action Plan
- Resiliency Improvement Plan
- Green Streets Plan.

Figure I-8: MTP Regional Assessment Handout



Regional Assessment

Establishes the framework for which the strategic direction and transportation investments are based. The regional assessment was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and the public through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Five themes emerged through this public engagement process.

Emerging Themes

Connectivity & Accessibility

Connectivity refers to how easily and safely people can travel across the transportation system. It impacts travel distances, mode choice, and quality of life, influencing access to destinations like schools and parks. The Rockford Region faces connectivity challenges related to street networks, public transit, and intercity travel, often impacted by physical barriers like railroads or freeways.

Maintenance and Operations

Preservation and maintenance ensure the transportation system remains in good condition throughout its lifecycle. While these activities don't enhance capacity, they improve performance and condition through strategic planning, monitoring, and asset management. Asset management focuses on maintaining safe, efficient, and resilient infrastructure, which will be key in planning and investing in the region's transportation system over the next 25 years.

Economic Vitality

Transportation is crucial to the economic vitality of the Rockford Region, supporting industries that rely on efficient freight movement. A significant portion of the region's workforce is employed in freight-dependent sectors, which also contribute greatly to the region's economic output. The Chicago Rockford International Airport plays a key role as a major cargo hub, driving growth in logistics and warehousing industries and strengthening the region's position in the global supply chain.

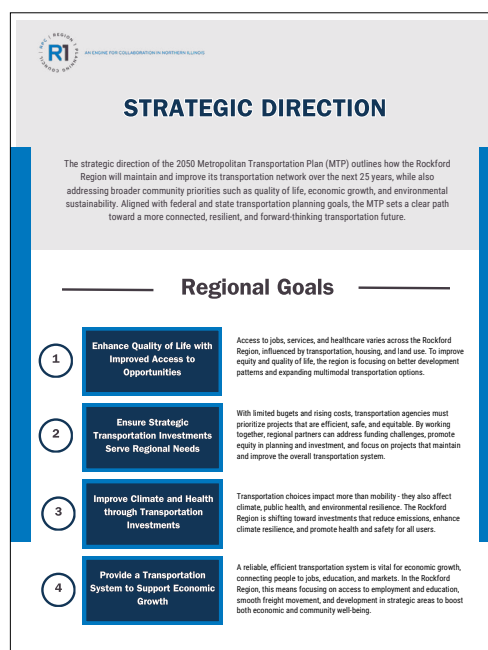
Balanced Growth

The Rockford Region has seen rapid urban sprawl, leading to vehicle-dependence and resource strain. To support upcoming economic growth, a balanced development approach is needed, focusing on Smart Growth principles like mixed land use, walkability, and conservation. R1 is creating a framework to guide sustainable housing and industry growth while preserving resources.

Quality of life

Quality of Life is influenced by social, environmental, and economic factors, with transportation playing a key role. While it provides vital access, transportation can also divide communities and harm the environment. Efforts are underway to prioritize health and quality of life in planning, focusing on traffic safety, environmental stewardship, and health in the Rockford Region.

Figure I-9: MTP Strategic Direction Handout



Strategic Direction

Establishes the framework for which the strategic direction and transportation investments are based. The regional assessment was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and the public through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Five themes emerged through this public engagement process.

Regional Goals

1. Enhance Quality of Life with Improved Access to Opportunities

Access to jobs, services, and healthcare varies across the Rockford Region, influenced by transportation, housing, and land use. To improve equity and quality of life, the region is focusing on better development patterns and expanding multimodal transportation options.

2. Ensure Strategic Transportation Investments Serve Regional Needs

With limited budgets and rising costs, transportation agencies must prioritize projects that are efficient, safe, and equitable. By working together, regional partners can address funding challenges, promote equity in planning and investment, and focus on projects that maintain and improve the overall transportation system.

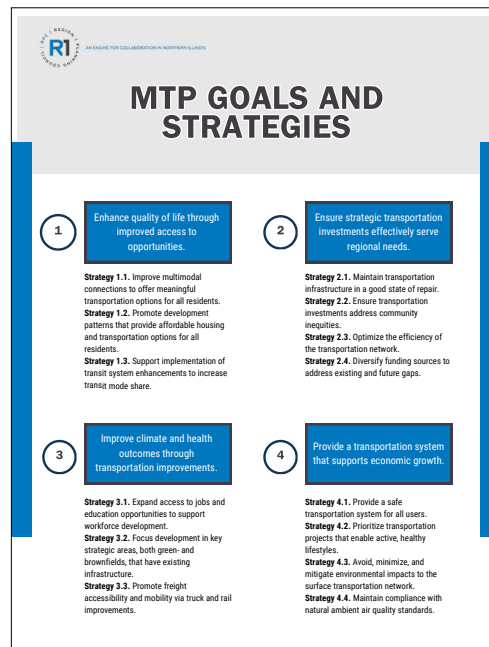
3. Improve Climate and Health through Transportation Investments

Transportation choices impact more than mobility- they also affect climate, public health, and environmental resilience. The Rockford Region is shifting toward investments that reduce emissions, enhance climate resilience, and promote health and safety for all users.

4. Provide a Transportation System to Support Economic Growth

A reliable, efficient transportation system is vital for economic growth, connecting people to jobs, education, and markets. In the Rockford Region, this means focusing on access to employment and education, smooth freight movement, and development in strategic areas to boost both economic and community well-being.

Figure I-10: MTP Goals and Strategies Handout



MTP Goals and Strategies

1. Enhance quality of life through improved access to opportunities.

Strategy 1.1. Improve multimodal connections to offer meaningful transportation options for all residents.

Strategy 1.2. Promote development patterns that provide affordable housing and transportation options for all residents.

Strategy 1.3. Support implementation of transit system enhancements to increase transit mode share.

2. Ensure strategic transportation investments effectively serve regional needs.

Strategy 2.1. Maintain transportation infrastructure in a good state of repair.

Strategy 2.2. Ensure transportation investments address community inequities.

Strategy 2.3. Optimize the efficiency of the transportation network.

Strategy 2.4. Diversify funding sources to address existing and future gaps.

3. Improve climate and health outcomes through transportation investments.

Strategy 3.1. Expand access to jobs and education opportunities to support workforce development.

Strategy 3.2. Focus development in key strategic areas, both green- and brownfields, that have existing infrastructure.

Strategy 3.3. Promote freight accessibility and mobility via truck and rail improvements.

4. Provide a transportation system that supports economic growth.

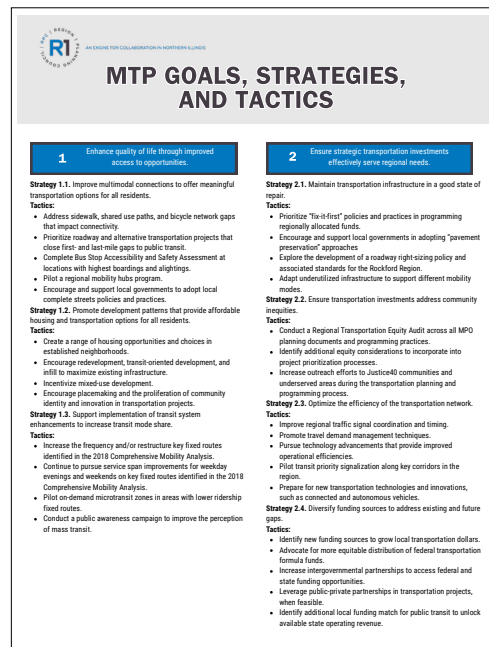
Strategy 4.1. Provide a safe transportation system for all users.

Strategy 4.2. Prioritize transportation projects that enable active, healthy lifestyles.

Strategy 4.3. Avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts to the surface transportation network.

Strategy 4.4. Maintain compliance with natural ambient air quality standards.

Figure I-11: MTP Goals, Strategies and Tactics Handout



MTP Goals, Strategies and Tactics

1. Enhance quality of life through improved access to opportunities.

Strategy 1.1. Improve multimodal connections to offer meaningful transportation options for all residents.

Tactics:

- Address sidewalk, shared use paths, and bicycle network gaps that impact connectivity.
- Prioritize roadway and alternative transportation projects that close first- and last-mile gaps to public transit.
- Complete Bus Stop Accessibility and Safety Assessment at locations with highest boardings and alightings.
- Pilot a regional mobility hubs program.
- Encourage and support local governments to adopt local complete streets policies and practices.

Strategy 1.2. Promote development patterns that provide affordable housing and transportation options for all residents.

Tactics:

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices in established neighborhoods.
- Encourage redevelopment, transit-oriented development, and infill to maximize existing infrastructure.
- Incentivize mixed-use development.
- Encourage placemaking and the proliferation of community identity and innovation in transportation projects.

Strategy 1.3. Support implementation of transit system enhancements to increase transit mode share.

Tactics:

- Increase the frequency and/or restructure key fixed routes identified in the 2018 Comprehensive Mobility Analysis.
- Continue to pursue service span improvements for weekday evenings and weekends on key fixed routes identified in the 2018 Comprehensive Mobility Analysis.
- Pilot on-demand microtransit zones in areas with lower ridership fixed routes.
- Conduct a public awareness campaign to improve the perception of mass transit.

2. Ensure strategic transportation investments effectively serve regional needs.

Strategy 2.1. Maintain transportation infrastructure in a good state of repair.

Tactics:

- Prioritize “fix-it-first” policies and practices in programming regionally allocated funds.
- Encourage and support local governments in adopting “pavement preservation” approaches
- Explore the development of a roadway right-sizing policy and associated standards for the Rockford Region.
- Adapt underutilized infrastructure to support different mobility modes.

Strategy 2.2. Ensure transportation investments address community inequities.

Tactics:

- Conduct a Regional Transportation Equity Audit across all MPO planning documents and programming practices.
- Identify additional equity considerations to incorporate into project prioritization processes.
- Increase outreach efforts to Justice40 communities and underserved areas during the transportation planning and programming process.

Strategy 2.3. Optimize the efficiency of the transportation network.

Tactics:

- Improve regional traffic signal coordination and timing.
- Promote travel demand management techniques.
- Pursue technology advancements that provide improved operational efficiencies.
- Pilot transit priority signalization along key corridors in the region.
- Prepare for new transportation technologies and innovations, such as connected and autonomous vehicles.

Strategy 2.4. Diversify funding sources to address existing and future gaps.

Tactics:

- Identify new funding sources to grow local transportation dollars.
- Advocate for more equitable distribution of federal transportation formula funds.
- Increase intergovernmental partnerships to access federal and state funding opportunities.
- Leverage public-private partnerships in transportation projects, when feasible.
- Identify additional local funding match for public transit to unlock available state operating revenue.

3. Improve climate and health outcomes through transportation improvements.

Strategy 3.1. Expand access to jobs and education opportunities to support workforce development.

Tactics:

- Pursue Bus Rapid Transit services on the East State Street corridor and a north-south corridor spanning from West Riverside Boulevard to the Chicago Rockford International Airport.
- Continue regional coordination between regional public transit providers to make trips more seamless and reliable for riders.
- Promote rural public transportation services.
- Support mobility management strategies that connect people to jobs and essential services.
- Promote shuttle services and active transportation infrastructure between major activity centers and educational institutions that are not already accommodated within 1/4 mile of public transit services.

Strategy 3.2. Focus development in key strategic areas, both green- and brownfields, that have existing infrastructure.

Tactics:

- Concentrate industrial and commercial development in Priority Production Areas.
- Prioritize transportation investments that are located within, or improves access to, planned and existing industrial and commercial developments.
- Protect and preserve farmland to support the region's economy.

Strategy 3.3. Promote freight accessibility and mobility via truck and rail improvements.**Tactics:**

- Collaborate and consult economic development organizations, businesses, and freight operators routinely to address issues related to freight movement in the region.
- Improve roadway and intersection geometrics to accommodate commercial vehicles, where feasible.
- Invest in highway projects that improve access to intermodal facilities.
- Increase load weight of heavily traversed truck routes and bridges.

4. Provide a transportation system that supports economic growth.**Strategy 4.1. Provide a safe transportation system for all users.****Tactics:**

- Conduct Road Safety Audits on priority corridors and implement recommendations.
- Enhance crosswalk visibility through improved signage and pavement markings.
- Construct separated bicycle facilities and shared use paths, where feasible.
- Install street lighting to improve visibility of intersections and pedestrians.
- Install traffic calming strategies, where appropriate.
- Upgrade at-grade railroad crossings with automatic warning devices or create grade separation, where feasible.

Strategy 4.2. Prioritize transportation projects that enable active, healthy lifestyles.**Tactics:**

- Seek partnership opportunities to implement Safe Routes to School Programs.
- Create non-motorized access and safe routes to open and recreational spaces.
- Increase public transit options for healthy food access.
- Improve physical access to health care services, mental health providers, and dental care.
- Consider all ages and abilities in the design and operation of the active transportation system.

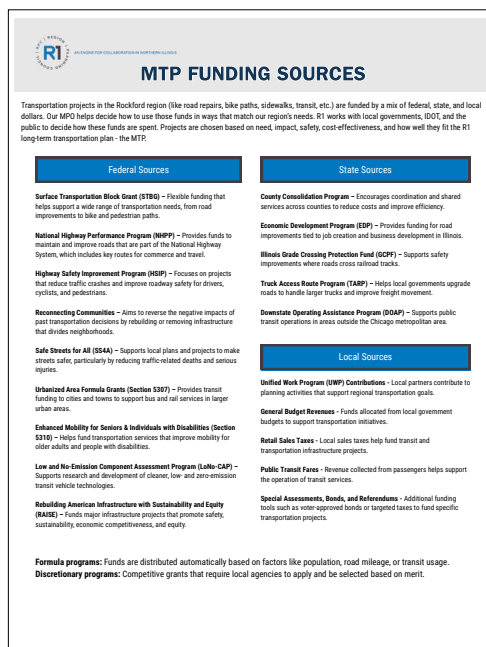
Strategy 4.3. Avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts to the surface transportation network.**Tactics:**

- Develop a Resiliency Improvement Plan.
- Address infrastructure issues on high-volume roadways and bridges prone to flooding.
- Preserve and expand open spaces and natural recreational areas.
- Encourage green infrastructure and other design approaches that effectively manage and mitigate stormwater runoff.

Strategy 4.4. Maintain compliance with natural ambient air quality standards.**Tactics:**

- Implement priority transportation system management and operations / congestion mitigation strategies.
- Designate locations and installation necessary infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles.
- Continue the conversion of public transportation fleets to hybrid and electric buses.
- Reduce exposure to transportation-related air pollution.

Figure I-12: MTP Funding Sources Handout



MTP Funding Sources

Transportation projects in the Rockford region (like road repairs, bike paths, sidewalks, transit, etc.) are funded by a mix of federal, state, and local dollars. Our MPO helps decide how to use those funds in ways that match our region's needs. R1 works with local governments, IDOT, and the public to decide how these funds are spent. Projects are chosen based on need, impact, safety, cost-effectiveness, and how well they fit the R1 long-term transportation plan- the MTP.

Federal Sources

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – Flexible funding that helps support a wide range of transportation needs, from road improvements to bike and pedestrian paths.

National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) – Provides funds to maintain and improve roads that are part of the National Highway System, which includes key routes for commerce and travel.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) – Focuses on projects that reduce traffic crashes and improve roadway safety for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Reconnecting Communities – Aims to reverse the negative impacts of past transportation decisions by rebuilding or removing infrastructure that divides neighborhoods.

Safe Streets for All (SS4A) – Supports local plans and projects to make streets safer, particularly by reducing traffic-related deaths and serious injuries.

Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307) – Provides transit funding to cities and towns to support bus and rail services in larger urban areas.

Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) – Helps fund transportation services that improve mobility for older adults and people with disabilities.

Low and No-Emission Component Assessment Program (LoNo-CAP) – Supports research and development of cleaner, low- and zero-emission transit vehicle technologies.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) – Funds major infrastructure projects that promote safety, sustainability, economic competitiveness, and equity.

State Sources

County Consolidation Program – Encourages coordination and shared services across counties to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Economic Development Program (EDP) – Provides funding for road improvements tied to job creation and business development in Illinois.

Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF) – Supports safety improvements where roads cross railroad tracks.

Truck Access Route Program (TARP) – Helps local governments upgrade roads to handle larger trucks and improve freight movement.

Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP) – Supports public transit operations in areas outside the Chicago metropolitan area.

Local Sources

Unified Work Program (UWP) Contributions – Local partners contribute to planning activities that support regional transportation goals.

General Budget Revenues – Funds allocated from local government budgets to support transportation initiatives.

Retail Sales Taxes – Local sales taxes help fund transit and transportation infrastructure projects.

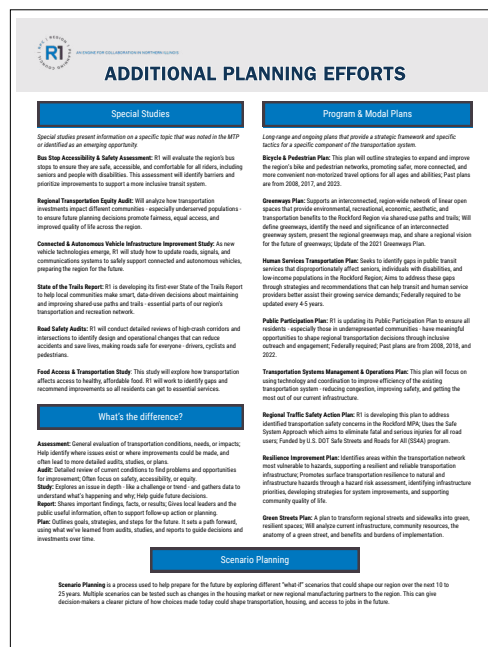
Public Transit Fares – Revenue collected from passengers helps support the operation of transit services.

Special Assessments, Bonds, and Referendums – Additional funding tools such as voter-approved bonds or targeted taxes to fund specific transportation projects.

Formula Programs: Funds are distributed automatically based on factors like population, road mileage, or transit usage.

Discretionary Programs: Competitive grants that require local agencies to apply and be selected based on merit.

Figure I-13: MTP Additional Planning Efforts Handout



Additional Planning Efforts

Special Studies

Special studies present information on a specific topic that was noted in the MTP or identified as an emerging opportunity.

Bus Stop Accessibility & Safety Assessment: R1 will evaluate the region's bus stops to ensure they are safe, accessible, and comfortable for all riders, including seniors and people with disabilities. This assessment will identify barriers and prioritize improvements to support a more inclusive transit system.

Regional Transportation Equity Audit: Will analyze how transportation investments impact different communities- especially underserved populations- to ensure future planning decisions promote fairness, equal access, and improved quality of life across the region.

Connected & Autonomous Vehicle Infrastructure Improvement Study: As new vehicle technologies emerge, R1 will study how to update roads, signals, and communications systems to safely support connected and autonomous vehicles, preparing the region for the future.

State of the Trails Report: R1 is developing its first-ever State of the Trails Report to help local communities make smart, data-driven decisions about maintaining and improving shared-use paths and trails- essential parts of our region's transportation and recreation network.

Road Safety Audits: R1 will conduct detailed reviews of high-crash corridors and intersections to identify design and operational changes that can reduce accidents and save lives, making roads safe for everyone- drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Food Access & Transportation Study: This study will explore how transportation affects access to healthy, affordable food. R1 will work to identify gaps and recommend improvements so all residents can get to essential services.

Program & Modal Plans

Long-range and ongoing plans that provide a strategic framework and specific tactics for a specific component of the transportation system.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan: This plan will outline strategies to expand and improve the region's bike and pedestrian networks, promoting safer, more connected, and more convenient non-motorized travel options for all ages and abilities; Past plans are from 2008, 2017, and 2023.

Greenways Plan: Supports an interconnected, region-wide network of linear open spaces that provide environmental, recreational, economic, aesthetic, and transportation benefits to the Rockford Region via shared-use paths and trails; Will define greenways, identify the need and significance of an interconnected greenway system, present the regional greenways map, and share a regional vision for the future of greenways; Update of the 2021 Greenways Plan.

Human Services Transportation Plan: Seeks to identify gaps in public transit services that disproportionately affect seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations in the Rockford Region; Aims to address these gaps through strategies and recommendations that can help transit and human service providers better assist their growing service demands; Federally required to be updated every 4-5 years.

Public Participation Plan: R1 is updating its Public Participation Plan to ensure all residents - especially those in underrepresented communities- have meaningful opportunities to shape regional transportation decisions through inclusive outreach and engagement; Federally required; Past plans are from 2008, 2018, and 2022.

Transportation Systems Management & Operations Plan: This plan will focus on using technology and coordination to improve efficiency of the existing transportation system- reducing congestion, improving safety, and getting the most out of our current infrastructure.

Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan: R1 is developing this plan to address identified transportation safety concerns in the Rockford MPA; Uses the Safe System Approach which aims to eliminate fatal and serious injuries for all road users; Funded by U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program.

Resilience Improvement Plan: Identifies areas within the transportation network most vulnerable to hazards, supporting a resilient and reliable transportation infrastructure; Promotes surface transportation resilience to natural and infrastructure hazards through a hazard risk assessment, identifying infrastructure priorities, developing strategies for system improvements, and supporting community quality of life.

Green Streets Plan: A plan to transform regional streets and sidewalks into green, resilient spaces; Will analyze current infrastructure, community resources, the anatomy of a green street, and benefits and burdens of implementation.

What's the difference?

Assessment: General evaluation of transportation conditions, needs, or impacts; Help identify where issues exist or where improvements could be made, and often lead to more detailed audits, studies, or plans.

Audit: Detailed review of current conditions to find problems and opportunities for improvement; Often focus on safety, accessibility, or equity.

Study: Explores an issue in depth- like a challenge or trend- and gathers data to understand what's happening and why; Help guide future decisions.

Report: Shares important findings, facts, or results; Gives local leaders and the public useful information, often to support follow-up action or planning.

Plan: Outlines goals, strategies, and steps for the future. It sets a path forward, using what we've learned from audits, studies, and reports to guide decisions and investments over time.

Scenario Planning

Scenario Planning is a process used to help prepare for the future by exploring different "what-if" scenarios that could shape our region over the next 10 to 25 years. Multiple scenarios can be tested such as changes in the housing market or new regional manufacturing partners to the region. This can give decision-makers a clearer picture of how choices made today could shape transportation, housing, and access to jobs in the future.

Endnotes

i Federal Highway Administration. n.d. Public Involvement. Transportation Planning Capacity Building. https://www.planning.dot.gov/planning/topic_PI.aspx

ii Federal Highway Administration. 2020. Module 2: Fundamentals of Transportation Planning. Building Links to Improve Safety: How Safety and Transportation Planning Practitioners Work Together. <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/tsp/fhwas16116/mod2.cfm>

iii Federal Highway Administration. 2023. Engage Community Representatives. FHWA Highway Safety Programs. <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths/engage-community-representatives>



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