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August 2025

## CEDS Draft Now Available for Your Input!

### Help Shape the Region's Economic Direction



The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) covering the next five years is complete and ready for your feedback. As a last step before the plan is adopted and implementation begins, R1 is looking for public input

Read through the plan and comment at <https://engager1.mysocialpinpoint.com/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy-ceds>. You can also speak with staff about the plan at an open house on **Tuesday, August 12** from 4-6 pm at the R1 offices at 127 N Wyman St., Rockford. The comment period closes on August 15.

The 2026-2030 CEDS is an economic development roadmap to make Northern Illinois more prosperous. Its actionable items will expand infrastructure, train the workforce, deepen community identity, and attract funding to the region – all crucial tasks. Its true value, however, is in the way it brings together diverse partners – government, private, education, economic - to make all of these outcomes happen.

## 2026 - 2030 CEDS: What's Inside

### Goal 1 – Investment

Topics: Infrastructure, green and brownfields, transportation, broadband



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employment, workforce housing

#### Goal 3 - Innovation

Topics: Technology hubs, entrepreneurship, emerging technologies, small business financing

#### Goal 4 - Economic Resilience

Topics: Supply chains, public/private partnerships, agriculture

#### Goal 5 - Quality of Place

Topics: Arts & culture, disaster preparedness, livable communities, regional marketing



**Click on the survey title to participate**



[Broadband Accessibility](#)

R1 is leading an initiative to expand internet access, affordability, and equity. This survey is looking for users' feedback regarding their current service and satisfaction (or lack thereof), and how they use the internet.



[Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#)

The CEDS is a five-year roadmap for regional economic development. This plan ensures the region's economic competitiveness, drives job creation, identifies funding, prioritizes projects, and improves quality of life.

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## **U.S. Representative LaHood Visits R1 for Regional Update**

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R1 welcomed U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood on Monday, July 28. He spoke to a room of 40 local government officials on tariffs; funding for Medicaid, transportation, and infrastructure; and answered audience questions.

## Public Transit, Now Serving Rural Winnebago County



**As of July 1, rural Winnebago County residents can take public transit right from their front door.** For those without reliable transportation, this new service opens up access to employment, healthcare, education, and independence.

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to destinations within the county or to the Rockford Mass Transit District's West State St. station with free transfers between systems. Reagan MTD is the public transit service provider for Lee and Ogle counties; Winnebago County routes are an extension of their services.

Users must book a ride at least 24 hours in advance by calling 815-288-2117. Hours of operation are Monday – Friday from 6:00 am – 6:00 pm. There is a small fee for service and all vehicles are handicap-accessible. See <https://reaganmasstransit.org> for full pricing and other information.

“The Rural Winnebago County Public Transportation service is a major step for an area that has not had any public transportation options,” says **Brandon Rucker**, R1 Transit Planner. R1 has been involved its coordination since 2021 and is extremely grateful for Reagan Mass Transit District to be the service administrator.”

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## NILBA Allocated State Funding in 2026 Illinois Budget



**Land banks provide value** in reducing blight, increasing tax revenue, and transforming neighborhoods. Illinois state legislators showed their support for land banks by including dedicated funding in the 2026 state budget. The Northern Illinois Land Bank Authority (NILBA) is set to receive \$2 million through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Other state land banks receiving funds include the Peoria Land Bank and South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority.

NILBA will use this funding to scale up its successful work: reducing blight and increasing housing availability. Since its formation in 2019, the Northern Illinois Land Bank Authority has been responsible for returning nearly \$30 million in property value to the tax base and continues to expand its service area.

R1 is grateful for advocacy in Springfield from Senator Stadelman and Representatives West and Vella, who helped make this funding possible.

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## Join R1's Free Charging Smart Program Help Your Community Plan for EV Charging Stations



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	July 2025	July 2024	Percent Change
Winnebago County	1,570	1,113	41% ↑
Boone County	345	240	44% ↑
McHenry County	3,683	2,638	40% ↑
Stephenson County	121	83	46% ↑
Ogle County	221	161	37% ↑
TOTAL	5,940	4,235	40% ↑

Electric vehicle (EV) adoption is increasing rapidly throughout Northern Illinois. Vehicle registrations increased 40 percent in July, compared to a year ago across Winnebago, Boone, McHenry, Stephenson and Ogle Counties.

Does your community have vehicle charging stations to accommodate drivers' shifting habits? What is the best site for EV charging stations? What type of infrastructure do you need to support them?

R1 offers free technical assistance to help your city, village or county determine: 1) Optimal locations for EV charging stations; 2) Site-specific infrastructure that's needed to support charging stations; 3) Zoning, permitting and other regulatory considerations; and 4) Available grants and funding opportunities.

Contact R1 Research Analyst Hailey Blanchard at [hblanchard@r1planning.org](mailto:hblanchard@r1planning.org) to join R1's [Charging Smart](#) program, offered through the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. Participation is free, and completing the program allows your community to earn a bronze, silver, or gold "Charging Smart" badge – a widely-recognized industry designation that demonstrates to EV charging station companies, EV drivers, and businesses that your community is EV-friendly and primed for charging station investment.

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