MPO Policy Committee Meeting

Friday, October 30, 2026 – 8:15 am
Region 1 Planning Council
127 N. Wyman Street, Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment
4. Discussion Items
    a. FY2029 Call for Attributable Funds (STBG, TAP and CRP) Projects
    b. Housing Opportunities Plan
5. Action Items
    a. Approval of the August 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes
    b. Approval of the October 14, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes
    c. Amendment to the FY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (Resolution 2026-12)
    d. Adoption of the 2026 Greenways: A Greenways Plan for Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties (Resolution 2026-13)
6. Staff Reports
    a. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Plan
    b. Green Streets Plan
    c. Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan
    d. Proposed 2027 Meeting Calendar
7. Agency Reports
8. Other Business
9. Adjournment

Opportunities for public comment will be afforded on all agenda items.

Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact R1 Planning at 815-319-4180 at least two working days before the need for such services or accommodations.

Call for Projects: MPO-Attributable Federal Funding

Region 1 Planning Council (R1), the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Urban and Metropolitan Area, is seeking eligible projects for the programming of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds.

This Call for Projects is will be open this winter. Completed applications must be submitted through the online portal no later than 4:30pm on the due date. At this time the MPO intends to review applications for FY 2029 apportionments allocated to the Rockford Urbanized Area.

Annual Allocations
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG): $4,976,477
Transportation Alternative Program (TAP): $648,632
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP): $658,185

Application materials can be found at https://r1planning.org/planning/call-for-projects/.

Questions may be submitted by email, telephone, or mailed to: Tim Verbeke, 127 N Wyman St., Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101, Phone: 815-319-4185 | Email: tverbeke@r1planning.org

About the MPO-Attributable Federal Funding

The Region 1 Planning Council, in its capacity as the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Region, is responsible for programming federal transportation funding programs allocated to the region. R1 is the recipient of direct sub-allocations of federal funding program, via Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), including STBG, TAP, and CRP. R1 is responsible for coordinating publicly funded transportation planning and transportation improvements among the various jurisdictions in Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties.

Surface Transportation Block Grant
The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) provides flexible funding for a wide variety of projects, including highways and transit. Surface Transportation Block Grant funds are the most versatile and may be used for any project that is recommended in or consistent with the R1 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Funds can be used on any federal-aid roadway classified above a local road or a rural minor collector and bridge projects on any public road.

Eligible projects can include highway projects and bridge improvements (construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration, and operational), transportation system management, public transit capital improvement projects, commuter rail, carpool projects, bus terminals and facilities, bikeways, and pedestrian facilities.

Transportation Alternative Program

The goal of the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) is to allocate resources to well-planned smaller scale, but critically important projects that provide and support connected alternate modes of transportation that are safe for all users, enhance the transportation system through preservation of visual and cultural resources, and improve the quality of life for members of the communities impacted.

Projects must enhance the transportation system be serving a transportation need or providing a transportation linkage, use, or benefit. Each project or activity must demonstrate a relationship to surface transportation. Project categories include: pedestrian/bicycle facilities (on-road and off-road), sidewalks; conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails; streetscapes (stand-alone landscape projects are ineligible); historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities; vegetation management in transportation rights-of-way; archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project; storm water management, control and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff; reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats; and construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.

Carbon Reduction Program

IIJA establishes the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), which provides funding to projects and programs that reduce transportation emissions. Funding can be used for a wide range of projects that support this goal, including: operational projects that improve traffic flow, such as the construction of roundabouts, left-turn lanes or other managed lanes; intelligent transportation systems; certain traffic control measures, such as traffic signal coordination, intersection improvements, and incident management; construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities; promotion of alternative travel modes, including ridesharing; acquisition, installation, or operation of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure or hydrogen, natural gas, or propane vehicle fueling infrastructure; construction of a bus rapid transit corridor or dedicated bus lanes; and purchase of new public transportation facilities and equipment.

Illinois Department of Transportation
Office of Highways Project Implementation / Bureau of Local Roads & Streets
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Room 205 / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

March 13, 2026

CIRCULAR LETTER 2026-03

FISCAL YEAR 2027 FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOTMENTS:
-- Surface Transportation Program – Rural (STR)
-- Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STU)
-- Local Bridge Formula Program (LBFP), and
-- State Matching Assistance (SMA)

COUNTY ENGINEERS / SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS / MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS / DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS / MAYORS / METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS – DIRECTORS

Attached to this Circular Letter is a listing of the state fiscal year (FY) 2027 federal Surface Transportation Program (STP), Local Bridge Formula Program (LBFP), and State Matching Assistance Program allotments. The federal formula allotments have been divided into STP-Rural (STR), STP-Urban (STU), and Local Bridge Formula Program (LBFP) categories, which are summarized as follows:

STP-Rural (STR):

The total amount of FY 2027 STR funds allotted to the counties is $79,860,242 with $71,227,901 to be distributed among the counties in Districts 2 through 9. The remaining $8,632,341 is for use by the eligible counties in District 1.

The formula for distribution of the STR funds to the downstate counties is as follows:

1. Ten percent divided equally among the downstate counties.
2. Balance allocated to the downstate counties based on the following three factors with equal weight being given to each factor:
   a. non-urban area
   b. non-urban population
   c. non-urban mileage (total all systems)

STP-Urban (STU):

The total amount of FY 2027 STU funds allotted to the urbanized areas is $275,712,778 with $227,109,192 to be utilized in District 1 for Northeastern Illinois. The remaining $48,603,586 is for utilization by Districts 2 through 9 urbanized areas with a population greater than 5,000. The STU funds are sub-allocated to the urbanized areas based on percentage of population of the individual urbanized area to the total urbanized area population for the entire state.

Local Bridge Formula Program (LBFP, formerly STP-Br):

The total amount of FY 2027 Local Bridge Formula Program funds allotted to all counties is $62,748,180. The funding is distributed based on the combined deficient square footage of eligible county, township, and municipal structures within a county.

Requests for local agencies to use the LBFP funds are to be made through the County Engineer with the approval of the IDOT District. Municipalities with a population of 15,000 or greater may program the funds directly through the IDOT District, with the amount coming from the total county allotment.

Distribution Data:

This year's federal funding allotments uses the 2020 census and urban areas, including any population updates received from the Secretary of State's office, and the 2024 Illinois Highway and Street Mileage Statistics non-urban mileage and non-urban area totals.

State Matching Assistance (SMA):

The formula for distribution of the $6,720,000 in State Matching Assistance is based on 68 percent federal funding and 32 percent local match. This match ratio is variable each year and is generated to result in utilization of the entire state matching assistance amount. A more detailed explanation of the state matching assistance program is also attached.

If you have any questions regarding the federal funding allotments or the State Matching Assistance Program, please contact your IDOT District Bureau of Local Roads and Streets office.

Sincerely,

Holly Bieneman

Holly Bieneman
Acting Bureau Chief of Local Roads and Streets
Director, Office of Planning and Programming

HB/hp

cc: Vershun Tolliver, FHWA Illinois Division Administrator
Lora Rensing, IDOT, Director, Office of Highways Project and Implementation
Russ Renner, Illinois Association of County Engineers
Molly Rockford, Illinois Association of County Engineers
Brad Cole, Illinois Municipal League
Jerry Crabtree, Township Officials of Illinois
Craig Smith, Township Highway Commissioners of Illinois

FY 2027
STP-RURAL ALLOTMENTS &
STATE MATCHING ASSISTANCE

COUNTY CODE	COUNTY	STP-RURAL ALLOTMENT	STATE MATCHING ASSISTANCE
001	ADAMS	**$1,074,100.54**	**$0.00**
003	ALEXANDER	**$336,158.51**	**$114,329.90**
005	BOND	**$522,100.58**	**$82,682.98**
007	BOONE	**$462,000.36**	**$0.00**
009	BROWN	**$396,254.63**	**$118,688.39**
011	BUREAU	**$1,013,651.37**	**$1,565.94**
013	CALHOUN	**$333,457.81**	**$99,581.38**
015	CARROLL	**$645,074.24**	**$51,135.65**
017	CASS	**$441,583.13**	**$99,829.48**
019	CHAMPAIGN	**$1,411,683.01**	**$0.00**
021	CHRISTIAN	**$875,583.11**	**$42,778.95**
023	CLARK	**$727,197.34**	**$160,349.04**
025	CLAY	**$656,825.92**	**$179,186.61**
027	CLINTON	**$956,982.32**	**$0.00**
029	COLES	**$642,736.43**	**$0.00**
031	COOK	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
033	CRAWFORD	**$594,346.61**	**$0.00**
035	CUMBERLAND	**$529,658.40**	**$122,452.86**
037	DEKALB	**$815,109.09**	**$0.00**
039	DEWITT	**$523,577.94**	**$0.00**
041	DOUGLAS	**$696,713.20**	**$0.00**
043	DUPAGE	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
045	EDGAR	**$703,783.84**	**$92,514.61**
047	EDWARDS	**$345,879.69**	**$94,362.96**
049	EFFINGHAM	**$738,226.63**	**$0.00**
051	FAYETTE	**$856,928.32**	**$215,092.98**
053	FORD	**$676,538.41**	**$110,745.80**
055	FRANKLIN	**$736,437.84**	**$82,648.96**
057	FULTON	**$1,012,548.30**	**$176,329.28**
059	GALLATIN	**$392,641.08**	**$141,841.05**
061	GREENE	**$660,967.22**	**$170,619.35**
063	GRUNDY	**$547,821.05**	**$0.00**
065	HAMILTON	**$564,039.51**	**$167,727.03**
067	HANCOCK	**$949,646.32**	**$200,787.98**
069	HARDIN	**$257,920.43**	**$89,229.13**
071	HENDERSON	**$468,724.87**	**$101,986.92**
073	HENRY	**$1,054,589.93**	**$0.00**
075	IROQUOIS	**$1,416,731.39**	**$262,323.16**
077	JACKSON	**$793,968.49**	**$0.00**
079	JASPER	**$638,291.25**	**$178,036.79**
081	JEFFERSON	**$857,200.44**	**$46,398.25**
083	JERSEY	**$527,726.30**	**$1,396.08**
085	JODAVIESS	**$814,682.60**	**$0.00**
087	JOHNSON	**$509,629.88**	**$146,709.29**
089	KANE	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
091	KANKAKEE	**$1,058,350.56**	**$0.00**
093	KENDALL	**$931,217.99**	**$0.00**
095	KNOX	**$856,104.54**	**$0.00**
097	LAKE	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
099	LASALLE	**$1,528,477.05**	**$0.00**
101	LAWRENCE	**$604,833.93**	**$171,138.21**
103	LEE	**$905,672.26**	**$0.00**
105	LIVINGSTON	**$1,287,151.07**	**$105,702.82**
107	LOGAN	**$769,961.43**	**$0.00**

FY 2027
STP-RURAL ALLOTMENTS &
STATE MATCHING ASSISTANCE

COUNTY CODE	COUNTY	STP-RURAL ALLOTMENT	STATE MATCHING ASSISTANCE
109	MCDONOUGH	**$729,763.85**	**$67,990.91**
111	MCHENRY	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
113	MCLEAN	**$1,451,637.88**	**$0.00**
115	MACON	**$724,417.16**	**$0.00**
117	MACOUPIN	**$1,212,973.82**	**$128,959.73**
119	MADISON	**$1,120,505.42**	**$0.00**
121	MARION	**$755,795.81**	**$39,720.05**
123	MARSHALL	**$556,071.87**	**$69,391.12**
125	MASON	**$685,611.96**	**$157,362.63**
127	MASSAC	**$356,227.69**	**$73,392.74**
129	MENARD	**$488,773.11**	**$53,221.84**
131	MERCER	**$741,699.74**	**$131,872.39**
133	MONROE	**$507,433.08**	**$0.00**
135	MONTGOMERY	**$844,338.85**	**$107,788.18**
137	MORGAN	**$685,119.05**	**$0.00**
139	MOULTRIE	**$558,164.26**	**$73,974.27**
141	OGLE	**$1,135,030.68**	**$0.00**
143	PEORIA	**$1,011,553.23**	**$0.00**
145	PERRY	**$595,961.10**	**$107,009.00**
147	PIATT	**$584,440.03**	**$0.00**
149	PIKE	**$943,874.20**	**$260,569.42**
151	POPE	**$381,020.66**	**$137,431.42**
153	PULASKI	**$309,337.73**	**$105,002.20**
155	PUTNAM	**$287,350.43**	**$24,649.82**
157	RANDOLPH	**$828,850.17**	**$94,031.93**
159	RICHLAND	**$484,612.62**	**$73,193.22**
161	ROCK ISLAND	**$586,195.68**	**$0.00**
163	ST CLAIR	**$1,141,828.61**	**$0.00**
165	SALINE	**$589,514.79**	**$125,266.48**
167	SANGAMON	**$1,227,805.73**	**$0.00**
169	SCHUYLER	**$523,537.46**	**$138,751.08**
171	SCOTT	**$342,015.71**	**$100,781.21**
173	SHELBY	**$1,018,861.62**	**$189,638.07**
175	STARK	**$385,477.09**	**$81,101.02**
177	STEPHENSON	**$802,426.03**	**$0.00**
179	TAZEWELL	**$946,756.69**	**$0.00**
181	UNION	**$525,796.76**	**$106,343.38**
183	VERMILION	**$1,267,786.03**	**$0.00**
185	WABASH	**$308,859.10**	**$41,783.65**
187	WARREN	**$632,303.02**	**$72,935.31**
189	WASHINGTON	**$711,153.80**	**$140,315.00**
191	WAYNE	**$914,768.93**	**$251,874.01**
193	WHITE	**$637,815.51**	**$137,478.09**
195	WHITESIDE	**$956,959.13**	**$0.00**
197	WILL	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
199	WILLIAMSON	**$729,675.35**	**$0.00**
201	WINNEBAGO	**$992,904.64**	**$0.00**
203	WOODFORD	**$883,407.97**	**$0.00**
	FINAL TOTALS	**71,227,901.27** *	**6,720,000.00**

*An additional $8,632,341.17 of STR Funds will be distributed among the District 1 counties

STATE MATCHING ASSISTANCE (SMA)

The State Matching Assistance Program is designed to assist counties in matching federal funds when the county cannot derive sufficient matching funds from local taxation. Counties receive a Surface Transportation Program Rural (STR) allotment which may be used to fund up to 80 percent of eligible project costs. Counties are allowed to levy a Federal-Aid Matching Tax to use for the local share. Although an 80/20 federal / local matching ratio is allowable for STR projects, a lower matching ratio is judged to be more equitable when determining the need for matching funds because the counties receive other federal-aid funds in addition to STR funds that require a local match. Some counties do not have a sufficient tax base to generate the local funds needed for the match. The State Matching Assistance Program of $6.72 million per year addresses this problem.

The county is required to levy a Federal-Aid Matching Tax of at least .045 percent to be eligible for assistance. To receive the maximum amount it is required to have a tax rate of .05 percent. If the rate is .045 percent, the allocation is 90 percent of the maximum. If the rate is between .045 percent and .05 percent, the assistance is prorated. If the rate falls below .045 percent, the county may retain its eligibility for assistance if a permanent transfer of funds from a non-highway fund to the Federal-Aid Matching Tax Fund is made to meet the equivalent of the minimum eligibility threshold.

The maximum assistance amount for each county is established as the difference between the amount required to match the county's STR allotment using a computer generated federal / local matching ratio and the funds generated by the county's Federal-Aid Matching Tax. This matching ratio is variable each year and is generated to result in utilization of the entire State Matching Assistance amount.

The amount of funds received by each county will vary from year to year. The variable amount of STR funds available each year and the local Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) as provided by the Department of Revenue have a direct correlation on the amount of funds to be disbursed based on shortfall. As an example, when the STR allotment increases, the counties will have a greater need for additional match. Conversely, when the STR allotment decreases, the counties will not have a need to match as much federal funding and therefore will require less State Matching Assistance Program funds.

State Matching Assistance Program funds may be used for any federal-aid project.

Commitment of Funds: If a county so desires, it may use its accumulated matching funds to defray any part or the entire non-federal portion of any local federal-aid project regardless of the federal matching percentage. The State Matching Assistance funds may be committed as a lump-sum amount or as a percentage of the project cost not to exceed the current available State Matching Assistance allotment for the county.

Anticipation: There can be no anticipation of State Matching Assistance funds. In other words, no county can commit more State Matching Assistance funds to a project than it has available at the time of letting. However, existing agreements for active projects may be amended to increase the amount of State Matching Assistance funding when it becomes available.

FY 2027
STU Allotments

	Urbanized Area	Allotment
	Anna / Jonesboro	$120,214.22
	Beardstown	$118,954.91
	Benton / West City	$147,219.45
*	Bloomington / Normal	$2,659,504.81
*	Brookport	$14,492.07
	Canton	$264,695.17
	Carbondale / Murphysboro	$578,683.37
	Carlinville	$114,137.55
	Carmi	$97,246.79
	Centralia / Central City / Wamac	$295,678.22
*	Champaign / Urbana / Savoy	$2,765,326.91
	- Mahomet (Part of Champaign MPO)	$188,576.82
	Charleston	$345,530.94
	Chester	$136,205.47
**	Chicago / Northeastern Illinois	$227,109,191.71
	Clinton	$140,003.40
	Danville / Belgium / Tilton / Westville	$707,392.94
*	Decatur	$1,673,824.14
*	Dekalb / Sycamore / Cortland	$1,264,608.05
	Dixon	$305,312.94
	DuQuoin / St. John's	$119,734.49
*	East Cape Girardeau	$5,776.84
*	East Dubuque	$30,083.54
**	East St. Louis / Alton	$8,414,156.07
	Effingham	$277,248.30
	Eureka	$104,482.83
	Freeport	$479,197.80
	Fulton	$72,900.11
	Galesburg / East Galesburg / Knoxville	$673,951.24
	Geneseo	$130,708.48
	Genoa	$105,902.05
	Gillespie	$109,540.06
	Greenville	$141,582.53
	Hamilton	$55,029.89
	Harrisburg	$164,290.11
	Hillsboro	$143,701.37
	Jacksonville / South Jacksonville	$418,131.21
	Jerseyville	$166,648.82
*	Kankakee	$1,380,584.59
	Kewanee	$250,043.19
	LaSalle / Peru / Oglesby	$640,069.78
	Lincoln	$265,614.67
	Litchfield	$132,027.76

FY 2027
STU Allotments

	Urbanized Area	Allotment
	Macomb	$300,855.38
	Marion	$786,089.88
	Mattoon	$337,215.49
	Mendota	$141,142.77
	Metropolis	$119,314.72
	Monmouth	$177,942.64
	Monticello	$118,755.02
	Morris	$283,105.09
	Mt. Carmel	$140,223.27
	Mt. Vernon	$291,840.32
	Olney	$173,924.83
	Ottawa / Naplate	$384,829.44
	Pana	$103,923.14
	Paris	$165,729.32
**	Peoria	$4,798,894.22
	Pontiac	$222,878.05
	Princeton	$156,554.34
	Quincy	$788,828.38
	Rantoul	$267,953.39
	Robinson	$142,921.80
	Rochelle / Hillcrest	$213,283.30
**	Rock Island / Moline	$2,606,193.98
**	Rockford	$4,879,350.19
	- Byron / Stillman Valley (Part of Rockford MPO)'	$97,126.86
*	South Beloit / Rockton	$316,866.62
	Salem	$145,560.35
*	Springfield	$2,986,865.69
	Sterling / Rock Falls	$470,802.39
	Streator / Kangley	$254,560.71
	Taylorville	$210,005.09
	Vandalia	$149,078.43
	West Frankfort	$151,956.85
		$275,712,777.56

* Urbanized areas over 50,000 and under 200,000 population
** Urbanized areas over 200,000 population
Note: Urban Areas based on 2020 census data

Illinois Department of Transportation
Office of Planning & Programming
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois 62764

February 10, 2026

Mr. Michael Dunn
Executive Director
Region 1 Planning Council
127 N. Wyman St. Suite 100
Rockford, Illinois 61101

PROVISIONAL FUNDING ALLOTMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREAS (TMAs) for

--- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
--- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)

Dear Mr. Dunn:

Included in this letter is a listing of the provisional federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026 funding allotments for the Transportation Management Area – Transportation Alternatives Program (TMA-TAP) and the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) for Region 1 Planning Council for use in the Rockford Transportation Management Area.

- TMA-TAP funds allocated for FFY26 are $648,632.

- Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds allocated for FFY26 are $658,185.

If you have any questions regarding these funding allotments, please contact Adam Gabany (adam.gabany@illinois.gov) for TMA-TAP or Christopher Schmidt (christopher.schmidt@illinois.gov) for CRP.

Sincerely,

Michael Vanderhoof
Bureau Chief of Planning

AN ENGINE FOR COLLABORATION IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Housing Plan

Introduction

Background

Since 2017, the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), comprised of portions of Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago counties, has seen a 75 percent increase in home prices, putting homeownership and renting further out of reach than ever. Housing units are aging and little new construction is occurring to support the anticipated growth in the region. Development of new housing has drastically slowed, with only about 17 percent of housing within the MPA built after the year 2000. Rising costs and interest rates have contributed to this issue, requiring developers, potential homeowners, and renters to spend more. Regardless of these factors, the Rockford region remains an attractive housing market, increasing the demand that drives prices up with it.

From dense urban cores to rural communities, expanding available housing stock is critical to addressing the housing crisis across the Rockford MPA. This Housing Plan considers differing housing needs across the three counties and guides the next steps by identifying vacant or underutilized properties for potential development.

Purpose & Scope

This region is comprised of sprawling rural land and denser urban cores, each of which have unique development priorities and patterns. Zoning regulations and ordinances – used to designate land uses and permitted types of building on each lot – control where and how development occurs. These ordinances set limits such as building size and height, which can limit the types of new housing units and slow the needed growth of housing stock.

The Housing Plan aims to lower barriers to development by compiling zoning requirements for parcels with immediate building capabilities. Parcels researched and presented in the Housing Plan have no planned development, or development was planned but not seen through. These parcels are zoned favorably and often have existing utilities suitable for housing units. Each property was researched based on current zoning classification to identify single-family, multi-family and mixed-use development opportunities. Example developments of varying types are visualized through the use of ESRI platforms to demonstrate the ready-to-build potential of these parcels. The plan is meant to directly serve local agencies and developers by making information accessible and development attainable.

Moving Forward

The majority of this Housing Plan is a collection of one-page profiles for underutilized parcels within the region. In these parcel profiles, characteristics of the parcel and its ownership are compiled to streamline the development process. Characteristics of each parcel including zoning, ownership, utility

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connection, and flood risk are listed to provide context for a parcel's buildability. This information, including aerial images for visual context, are compiled in comprehensive one-page profiles for each parcel. In this plan, the parcels are grouped by county.

Eight of the forty parcels highlighted in the Housing Plan were highlighted using three-dimensional models using CityEngine, an ESRI tool, by Region 1 Planning Council staff. Each model depicts realistic units within zoning code requirements. These models are valuable tools for property owners, developers, and local agencies to visualize and align building potential. The eight models can serve as inspiration for potential developers of these parcels and others around the Rockford Region. Upon request, R1 can create a visual model for any vacant parcel within the MPA boundary.

The eight parcel models are visualized through the StoryMaps page on the EngageR1 website. The Housing Plan and the StoryMap page work in tandem to highlight attainable housing development opportunities.

The following are key takeaways from parcels assessed within the region.

Takeaways

- Many developable parcels are around existing housing units, allowing investment into established communities
- Prioritizing possible multi-family development sites can increase available housing stock and create more "middle housing"
- Rural areas have many parcels suitable for single-family units

Next Steps

Building on the Housing Plan, Region 1 Planning Council will also develop the Regional Land Use Plan. This Land Use Plan will address issues such as housing, transportation, industrialization, and community spaces. Together, these plans will encourage an increase in available housing units and guide overall long-term development for the Rockford MPA.

Guide-posts to other Housing Plan documents (Engage, ESRI, future Land Use plan)

DRAFT

MPO Policy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 21, 2026 – 8:30 am

127 N. Wyman St. Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101

a. **Call to Order**

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Chiarelli at 8:30 am.

b. **Roll Call**

Members Present: Chairman Chiarelli, Winnebago County; Mayor Thomas McNamara, City of Rockford; Chairman Karl Johnson, Boone County; Faith Duncan, IDOT; Clint Morris, City of Belvidere; President Steve Johnson, Village of Machesney Park; Michael Stubbe, Rockford Mass Transit District; Mayor Greg Jury, City of Loves Park.

Members Absent: n/a

Other Present: Doug Delille, IDOT, OPP; Michael Dunn, Tim Verbeke, Sarah Renicker, Hallela Wagner, Aesha Acharya.

c. **Public Comment**

There were none present who wished to address the committee.

d. **Discussion: Livable Communities Initiative-**

LCI is a program where planning services are provided by Region 1 and implementation funds are provided by private partners.

i. Round 1-Keith Creek Neighborhood: In process of contract for construction of Nelson School Site to build a Flood Park to absorb water from neighborhood. There have been 4 neighborhood meetings where community was involved in planning. Project includes path installation, gazebo, and water absorption improvements.

ii. Round 2- Midtown Neighborhood: There as been one meeting to go over two options: Railroad Ave. Beautification or Broadway Storefront improvement plan (ultimately voted on). All management has been in-house at R1 (with some contractors hired for work. Business owners will fill out application to see what they want done to the façade of their buildings. Foal is to have 10 business participate. All work will be completed within a week of initial implementation. The hope is that there are a variety of improvement projects requested (signs, paint, outdoor seating, etc.) Mayor McNamara asked if the storefront had to be for an existing business. Mr. Verbeke indicated government buildings and large companies are excluded from eligibility. He then explained that those applying for LCI should not be eligible for CoR vacant store program, so as to extend reach of the program. Mr. Dunn then indicated that Jason's team (Community Impact) is working to expand census tracks, to expand neighborhood reach, and then recognized Hallela Wagner and her team for their work on this project.

iii. Round 3- Open for applications. R1 is looking for applications (from eligible neighborhoods that have been expanded by 20). Applications are to be done at the Alderman level: addresses the gap in the quality of presentations to the deciding committees and levels the playing field. Applications are due after Labor Day, with presentations at the October 22, 2026 Community Advisory Committee meeting. Final

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approval will be made at the November 12 R1 Governing Board meeting. *Call Tim Verbeke for application assistance.

e. Action Items

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes of June 26, 2026

Chairman Chiarelli entertained a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of the May 1, 2026 MPO Policy Committee. Motioned by Mayor McNamara, seconded by Village President Johnson with no discussion. Motion **passed** by unanimous voice vote.

b. Adoption of the FY2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (Resolution 2026-11)

Four projects submitted by IDOT-Raise moving forward. Chairman Chiarelli called for a motion to approve. Mayor McNamara motioned, with a second by Mayor Jury. Motion **passed** by unanimous voice vote.

f. **Director Reports**

- R1 will have an STBG Meeting with IDOT to discuss updated scoring matrix and will be presenting at the October meeting, and how changes will impact projects going forward. The purpose of the scoring update is to review the Economic Impact score to be able to make more objective/less subjective decisions. There will be a Call-for-Projects open from November 7-December 2, 2026 for applications ranging 2 years out (2029).
- Railroad update- IDOT indicates December 2027 is still a hard deadline for passenger service, and has a meeting with Union Pacific next Thursday.
- Streetlight platform has been purchased and municipalities are encouraged to reach out to run helpful scenarios through the system. The Park District is currently using the platform and has requested more information.
- WCHA-running a Truck Demand Model-for Baxter Road/251/I-39, as well including as ITEP application.

Agency Reports:

- City of Belvidere-ComEd performing an LED light replacement program in residential areas, city-wide. Progress is currently being postponed, and information is going to be shared with City of Rockford.

g. **Adjournment**

Chairman Chiarelli entertained a motion to adjourn. Motion by Mayor Morris, second by Mayor Jury. Meeting adjourned at 8:51 am.

Meeting minutes prepared by: Sarah Renicker

Minutes approved by action of the Board: _____

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COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS

MPO Policy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 14, 2026 at 12:00pm

127 N. Wyman St. Suite 100, Rockford, IL 61101

a. **Call to Order**

In the initial absence of Chairman Chiarelli, a invitation was raised to nominate Mayor Jury as Chair Pro tem for the purposes of running the special meeting of the MPO Policy Committee. Initial motion made by Mr. Stubbe, RMTD and seconded by Mayor Neal, City of Rockford. Vote passed by unanimous voice vote. With quorum present the meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm.

b. **Roll Call**

Members Present: Chairman Chiarelli (12:08pm), Winnebago County; Mayor Janessa Neal, City of Rockford; Chairman Karl Johnson, Boone County; Faith Duncan, IDOT; Jordan Keck, City of Belvidere; President Steve Johnson, Village of Machesney Park; Michael Stubbe, Rockford Mass Transit District; Mayor Greg Jury, City of Loves Park.

Members Absent: n/a

Other Present: Doug Delille, IDOT, OPP; Tim Verbeke, Sarah Renicker, Todd Schmidt, FHWA (via zoom).

c. **Public Comment**

There were none present who wished to address the committee.

e. Action Items

a. Approval of the Safe Streets 4 All Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan Mr. Verbeke explained that the development of the Regional Transportation Safety Action plan began in 2023 to look at traffic safety in the region, and that the introduction to the final document is included in the meeting packet. It was decided that the best use of the project was to create 4 distinctly unique safety plans for Winnebago County, Boone County, City of Rockford, and a Regional plan. The Regional plan is the final one to be approved, and is due by the end of October. The main focus of the plan highlights the high injury network and most dangerous roadways using camera and video analytics. AI was used toward the end to process the data. Final plans go into detail about how to improve traffic safety and action plans. Next steps will be to pursue implementation and/or capital projects moving forward to improve intersections. The development of this particular plan was due to the inclusion of necessary technical reports and economic impact analysis of each event, including impact to employers, victim, tow truck/traffic diversions, etc. Mayor Neal asked for clarification regarding most fatalities occurring in Rockford, and the intersections not necessarily matching the regional plan. Mr. Verbeke explained that the Regional plan had to pick and disperse examples from throughout the entire area, with Rockford being a portion of the covered area. With no further questions Chair Pro-tem Jury called for a motion to approve the Regional Safety Action Plan. Chairman Chiarelli, Winnebago County motioned for a vote to approve, Mr. Stubbe seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

g. **Adjournment**

With no further business Chair Pro-tem Jury called for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Neal entertained a motion to adjourn seconded by Chairman Chiarelli. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by: Sarah Renicker Minutes approved by action of the Board: _____

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REGION 1 PLANNING COUNCIL
MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

MPO RESOLUTION 2026-12

RE: **Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program**

WHEREAS the Federal Highway Act of 1962, as amended, and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended, provide for an urban transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) currently authorizes funding to improve our nation's transportation system for highways, highway safety, public transit, alternative non-motorized forms of transportation, and freight; and

WHEREAS the IIJA Act and its predecessors, require a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as well as a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS the Region 1 Planning Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Urban and Metropolitan Area, and the MPO Policy Committee has the specific responsibility to direct and administer the continuing urban transportation planning process: and

WHEREAS the MPO Policy Committee has adopted the August 6, 2026 version of the Fiscal Year 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and;

WHEREAS the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have approved the FY 2027-2030 MPO TIP; and

WHEREAS the Illinois Department of Transportation has requested an amendment to ten (10) existing projects and the addition of one (1) new projects, Boone County Highway Department has requested the addition of one (1) new project, the City of Belvidere has requested the addition of one (1) new project, the Village of Winnebago has requested the addition of one (1) new project and the City of Byron has requested the addition of one (1) new project; and

WHEREAS the projects being amended in the approved version of the FY 2027-2030 TIP will not affect or impact the other projects listed in the FY 2027-2030 MPO TIP; and

WHEREAS the MPO Technical Committee has recommended the adoption of the TIP amendment by the MPO Policy Committee; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The MPO Policy Committee hereby amends the FY 27-30 MPO Transportation Improvement Programs to include the projects listed in "Attachment A".

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We hereby certify the foregoing has been approved by a majority of the MPO Policy Committee Members on this 30th Day of October 2026.

Chairman Joseph V. Chiarelli MPO Chair	Chairman Karl Johnson MPO Vice-Chair

Number of members authorized to vote _____ Ayes_____ Nays_____ Abstain_____

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Attachment A

Fiscal Year 2027

Highway Projects

Project #	Project Location	Termini	Project Type	Phase of Work	Federal Share		State Share		Other Share		Total	Amendment Action
					Source	Amount	Source	Amount	Source	Amount		
01 - Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)												
01-17-07	I-39, US 20 & Harrison Avenue	I-39, 0.8 miles North of Blackhawk Road, US 20 to I-39; Harrison Ave; Bell School Road	Capacity	PE	NHPP	$320,000	State Share	$80,000			$662,000	New Project Phase, new funding
				CE	NHPP	$210,000	State Share	$52,000				
01-18-11	IL-173	0.4 mile E of IL-76 to McHenry County Line	Preservation	ROW	NHPP	$1,844,000	State Share	$461,000			$4,346,000	Change of FY and new Project Phase
				PE	NHPP	$1,633,000	State Share	$408,000				
01-20-01	IL-2	IL-72 in Byron to N River Dr	Preservation	PE	NHPP	$4,614,000	State Share	$1,153,000			$5,767,000	New Project Phase
01-20-03	US BUS 20	Shaw Road east of Winnebago County Line to 0.1 mile northeast of State Street in Belvidere	Capacity	CE	NHPP	$4,032,000	State Share	$1,008,000			$10,023,000	New Project Phase, new funding
				PE	NHPP	$1,144,000	State Share	$286,000				
				ROW	NHPP	$2,842,000	State Share	$711,000				
01-20-09	US BUS 20 (Belvidere Bypass)	State Street to US 20 in Belvidere	Bridge	PE	NHPP	$546,000	State Share	$136,000			$682,000	Change of FY
01-20-12	IL-251	Dry Creek 0.3 mi No of McCurry Rd, N Kinnikinnick Creek 0.1 mi S of Hononeghah Rd & S Kinnikinnick Creek 0.8 mi S of Hononeghah Rd	Bridge	PE	NHPP	$191,000	State Share	$48,000			$239,000.00	Change of FY and reduction in funding
01-20-20	IL-251	Dry Creek 0.3 mile north of McCurry Road, north Kinnikinnick Creek 0.1 mile south of Hononegah road & south Kinnikinnick Creek 0.8 mile south of Hononeghah	Bridge	PE	NHPP	$140,000	State Share	$35,000			$175,000	Change of FY and reduction in funding
01-21-08	I-90/US 20	US 20 bridge over I-90 between Wheeler Rd and Ipsen Rd	Bridge	CON			State IL	$36,435,000.00			$56,930,000	Increase and change to funding, change to project type
							State IL	$20,495,000.00				
01-21-12	IL-251	Kishwaukee Street to east of 9th Street in Rockford	Preservation	PE	NHPP	$4,000	State Share	$1,000			$5,000	New project phase

01-23-11	IL-251	Dry creek, N & S Kinnikinnick Creek	Bridge	CE	NHPP	$1,000,000	State Share	$250,000			$1,250,000	New project phase
01-27-06	Kishwaukee Bridge Replacement	I39 at Kishwaukee River	Bridge	CON			State IL	$96,000,000			$96,000,000	New Project
14 - City of Belvidere												
14-27-01	Safe Routes to Belvidere Schools	east side of 7th Avenue from 5th Street to Allen Street, the north side of Allen Street from 7th Avenue to 5th Avenue, and the east side of 5th Avenue from Allen Street to just north of 5th Street	Bike/Ped	CON			State IL	$216,134	Local	$30,876	$247,010	New Project
52 - City of Byron												
52-27-01	N. Tower Road/E. Mill Road Intersection Improvements	550' North of Mill/Tower Intersection to 533' East of Mill/Tower Intersection	Intersection	PE	HSIP	$1,753,915	State IL	$194,880			$1,948,795	New Project
13 - Boone County Highway Dept.												
13-27-01	Piscasaw Creek 3-Bridge Replacement Bundle	Squaw Prairie Rd, Marengo Rd, Lawrenceville Rd	Bridge	PE	RTA	$592,469					$592,469	New Project

Fiscal Year 2028

Highway Projects

Project #	Project Location	Termini	Project Type	Phase of Work	Federal Share		State Share		Other Share		Total	Amendment Action
					Source	Amount	Source	Amount	Source	Amount		
50 -Village of Winnebago												
13-27-01	Village of Winnebago Sidewalk Project	School Street from Shelden Dr to Elidia St	Bike/Ped	CON	IDOT Safe Routes to School	$250,000			Local	$69,400	$319,400	New Project

REGION 1 PLANNING COUNCIL
MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

MPO RESOLUTION 2026-13

RE: **Adoption of the 2026 Greenways: A Greenways Plan for Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties**

WHEREAS the Federal Highway Act of 1962, as amended, and the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended, provide for an urban transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) currently authorizes funding to improve our nation's transportation system for highways, highway safety, public transit, alternative non-motorized forms of transportation, and freight; and

WHEREAS the Region 1 Planning Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Urban and Metropolitan Area, and the MPO Policy Committee has the specific responsibility to direct and administer the continuing urban transportation planning process: and

WHEREAS the Planning through Environmental Linkages approach outlined by FHWA says State and local agencies can achieve significant benefits by adopting environmental and community values into the transportation planning process early in planning and carrying these considerations through project delivery; and

WHEREAS previous iterations of Greenways Plan have helped to promote a regional greenway network that helps to protect natural and cultural resources, provides alternative forms of transportation, improved recreational benefits, enhances environmental and scenic qualities, and stimulates economic development; and

WHEREAS the Greenways Planning Committee endorses the 6th iteration of the Greenways Map and Planning Document, titled **2026 Greenways: A Greenways Plan for Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties**; and

WHEREAS the MPO Technical Committee has reviewed MPO Resolution 2026-13 and has recommended that the Boone and Winnebago County Greenways Map and Planning Document be adopted by the MPO Policy Committee; and

WHEREAS MPO encourages its partner agencies to also adopt the **2026 Greenways: A Greenways Plan for Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties** and to incorporate the plan in future development plans within the region; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

the MPO Policy Committee hereby adopts the **2026 Greenways: A Greenways Plan for Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties** dated October 30, 2026.

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Dated this 30th day of October 2026.

Joseph V. Chiarelli, MPO Chair
Winnebago County Chairman
Winnebago County

Karl Johnson, MPO Vice-Chair
Boone County Board Chairman
Boone County

Clint Morris
Mayor
City of Belvidere

Steve Johnson
Mayor
Village of Machesney Park

Janessa Neal
Mayor
City of Rockford

Greg Jury
Mayor
City of Loves Park

Michael Stubbe
Executive Director
Rockford Mass Transit District

Illinois Department of Transportation, Region 2

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2026 Greenways:

A Greenways Plan for Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties

Draft Report | 10.27.2026

RPC | REGION 1 PLANNING COUNCIL | R1

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Greenways are a vital connection between the transportation network and the natural environment. Greenways connect people to nature through natural corridors, such as paths and trails. A successful regional greenway network protects natural and cultural resources, provides equal access to green space, encourages alternative transportation and recreational benefits, and stimulates sustainable economic development. The purpose of the 2026 Greenways Plan is to support an interconnected, region-wide network of paths and trails that provides environmental, recreational, economic, aesthetic, and transportation benefits to the Rockford Region.

What are Greenways?

Greenways are vital green infrastructure elements that connect parks, preserves, wetlands, unique habitats, and other environmentally sensitive areas across urban and rural landscapes. They support the natural movement of plants and animals while also providing quality of life benefits to nearby communities. Modern greenway systems have evolved from early parkway and conservation movements that sought to preserve natural landscapes while improving public access to outdoor spaces. Today greenways are commonly integrated into regional transportation and land use due to their ability to support both recreational and transportation-related trips. Greenways can vary significantly in scale, ranging from short neighborhood connectors to large regional trail systems that span multiple jurisdictions. In many communities, greenways can also serve as an alternate form of transportation that improve non-motorized access between residential areas, employment centers, parks, schools, and downtown districts.

A greenway can broadly be defined as a natural corridor of land connecting existing areas of open space. According to one of the first experts in the field, Charles E. Little, the full definition of a greenway is:

1. "A linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route;
2. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage;
3. An open-space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas; and
4. Locally, certain strip or linear parks designated as a parkway or greenbelt."[i]

Charles E. Little is an author who focused on subjects like land use and conservation, and specifically the modernization of greenways projects in America. His work in the early 1990s compiled a history of environmental planning that led to the popularity of greenways in American cities. His focus on the subject has raised awareness for environmental consciousness not just in urban design but in everyday life.



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

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Greenways vary in form and function depending on their surroundings. Rural greenways may encompass expansive wetlands or marshes, while urban greenways often appear as narrow corridors weaving through dense development or along repurposed industrial routes. Some follow rivers or streams; others occupy abandoned railways, power lines, or hedgerows in agricultural fields. In the Rockford Region, greenways most often take the form of shared-used paths and trails.

Greenways are commonly a mixture of public and private lands; public greenway corridors are open to the public, whereas private greenway corridors have restricted access. What unites all greenways is their role in creating a continuous, interconnected network essential to ecological and human systems.

History of Greenways Planning

The vision for a regional greenway network in Illinois began at the 1995 Governor's Workshop on Greenways and Trails, initiated by Governor Edgar and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The event led to a statewide program to promote cooperative, comprehensive planning for protecting greenways and developing trails across jurisdictions.

In 1996, local agencies and community members in the Rockford Region convened to develop a greenways plan. Their goal was to map out existing natural areas and identify opportunities to connect them through trails and green spaces. The purpose of the plan was to:

- Create a regional vision and planning framework,
- Guide resource allocation,
- Facilitate ongoing regional collaboration,
- Coordinate greenways with transportation, stormwater, and development efforts, and
- Promote awareness and stewardship of greenways.

The first Greenways Plan and Map for the Rockford Region was published in 1997. Updated editions in 2004 and 2011 incorporated further community input, documented and led to expansions of trail systems, and developed new goals.

The 2011 plan, led by the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), now called Region 1 Planning Council (R1), introduced new goals to improve public health, promote active transportation, and integrate greenways with environmental and transportation planning efforts. It was also the first time the map was developed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This enabled partner agencies to digitally visualize and analyze the interrelated relationships, patterns, and trends of the region's green infrastructure network.

In 2015 and 2021, the Greenways Plan was updated alongside a strategic plan for the future of the Rockford Region's greenway network.

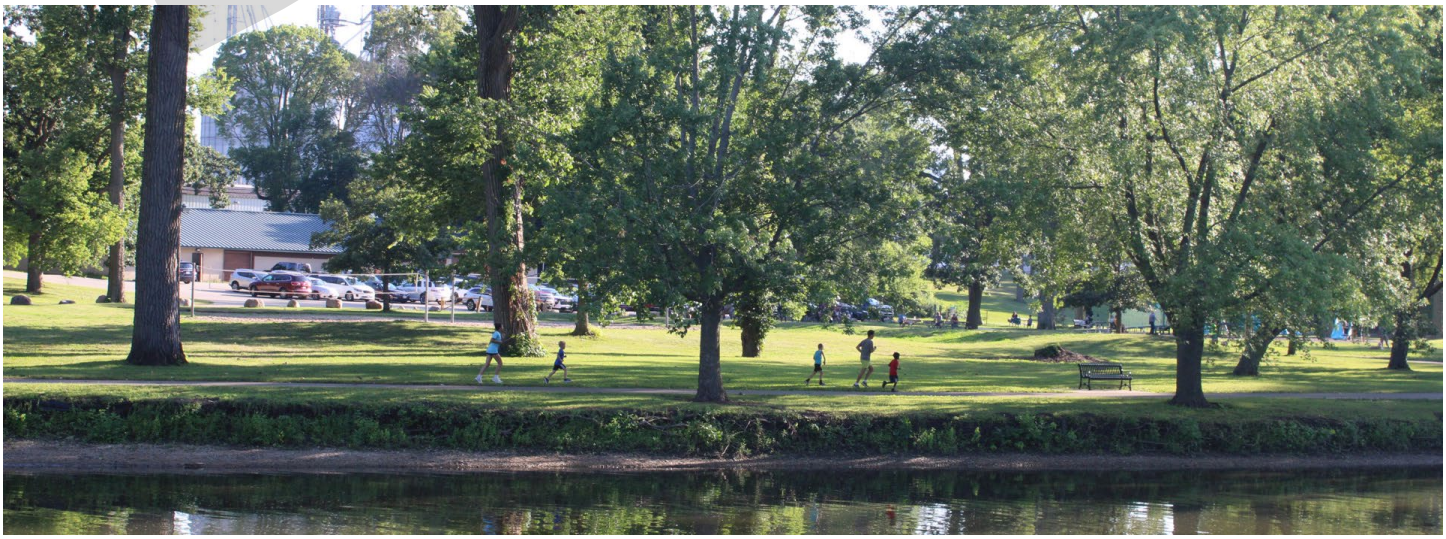


Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

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2026 Greenways Plan

The 2026 Greenways Plan and Map builds upon previous versions of this initiative while advancing the initial vision to promote a regional greenway network that protects natural and cultural resources. The purpose of the Greenways Plan is to:

- Support equal access to green space,
- Provide alternative forms of transportation and recreational benefits,
- Enhance environmental and scenic qualities, and
- Stimulate sustainable, equitable economic development.

The plan and map serve as a comprehensive regional planning tool to help leverage and secure additional funds for government agencies, nonprofits, and others involved in transportation and land use planning, sustainability initiatives, natural areas preservation, and recreation.

Vision

Now in its sixth iteration, the Greenways Plan has guided environmental protection, balanced growth, and expanded transportation options. It has supported successful grants for regional habitat restoration and shared-use path expansion. The planning process also fosters coordination among agencies involved in transportation, water management, natural lands, and other environmental and conservation initiatives.

This vision for the 2026 Greenways Plan for the Rockford Region is as follows:

> Cultivate a thriving, interconnected greenway network linked by accessible shared-use paths and trails informed by an understanding of existing conditions and future community needs. Provide communities access to natural and cultural resources through efficient investment and environmental protection. Maintain the functional ability of greenways as well as their accommodations for regional biodiversity.

The sixth edition of the Greenways Plan identifies key themes aimed at building upon and improving current and past greenways efforts. The key themes provide a framework for greenways planning in the Rockford Region over the next five years.

Connectivity

Greenways support a connected region and connected communities. Connectivity is critical for human and natural environments. It is also vital for integrating social and ecological systems. Ecological connectivity concerns the connection between habitats and organisms' access to natural resources. Connectivity in a social context refers to human access to greenspace and community resources.

Access

Greenways aim to provide access to greenspace. Portions of the region face limited access to greenways due to underlying vulnerabilities and ongoing socioeconomic and environmental disparities.[ii] Greenways planning recognizes, prioritizes, and seeks to address needs of communities disconnected from natural and cultural resources while protecting natural systems.

Environmental Prosperity

Greenways promote environmental stewardship and the protection and appreciation of natural resources. They preserve natural resources and enhance ecosystem services to support long-term ecological health and resilience. By offering opportunities for environmental education, stewardship, and access to natural land, greenways promote environmental protection within the communities they serve.

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Planning Process

The 2026 Greenways Plan and Map for the Rockford Region was developed over a year using a phased process that included three rounds of public engagement. Data was collected with the help of regional partners, alongside planners at R1 to help guide the work done in updating the greenways plan to better fit the needs of the MPA in 2026. R1 planners also engaged the public to get a well-rounded view of the good and bad occurring by regular users of greenways in the MPA in the years since the last update. That feedback from the public and local partners measured the previous plans results and shaped the updates to the goals for the region in the 2026 update.

Phase 1. Project Scoping

The initial project development identified the project scope, final deliverables, budget, timeframe, and project team. This also included a comprehensive review of previous editions of the Greenways Plan and Map.

Phase 2. Research, Data Analysis & Mapping

Research was conducted on greenways planning best practices and regional needs. Data analysis collected updated demographic, economic, and land use trends. This regional and environmental data was used to analyze the region's history and current conditions. Mapping efforts incorporated the data into an online mapping application and a printable map.

Phase 3. Public Engagement

Public engagement was conducted to determine the current and future needs of the region's greenways. This included the reformation of the Greenways Working Group consisting of partner agencies and community organizations, including environmental planning and conservation advocacy groups. The working group informed the development of the plan's goals, map design, and final product.

Round 1. Needs & Opportunities

This round of engagement provided project-specific education to the public and stakeholders. Through a public survey on the current conditions of greenways, specific locations in need of greenway development or enhancement were identified.

Round 2. Goals & Strategies

The second round of public engagement solicited public insight on the proposed greenways scenarios and recommended strategies.

Round 3. Public Comment

During the final round of public engagement, the draft plan was released for a 30-day public comment period to verify the information and to give the community an opportunity to offer further feedback on the plan and map.

Phase 4. Plan Development

The plan development phase involved drafting the 2026 Greenways Plan update for the Rockford Region. Once the plan was drafted, the draft document was released for public comment.

Phase 5. Project Wrap-up

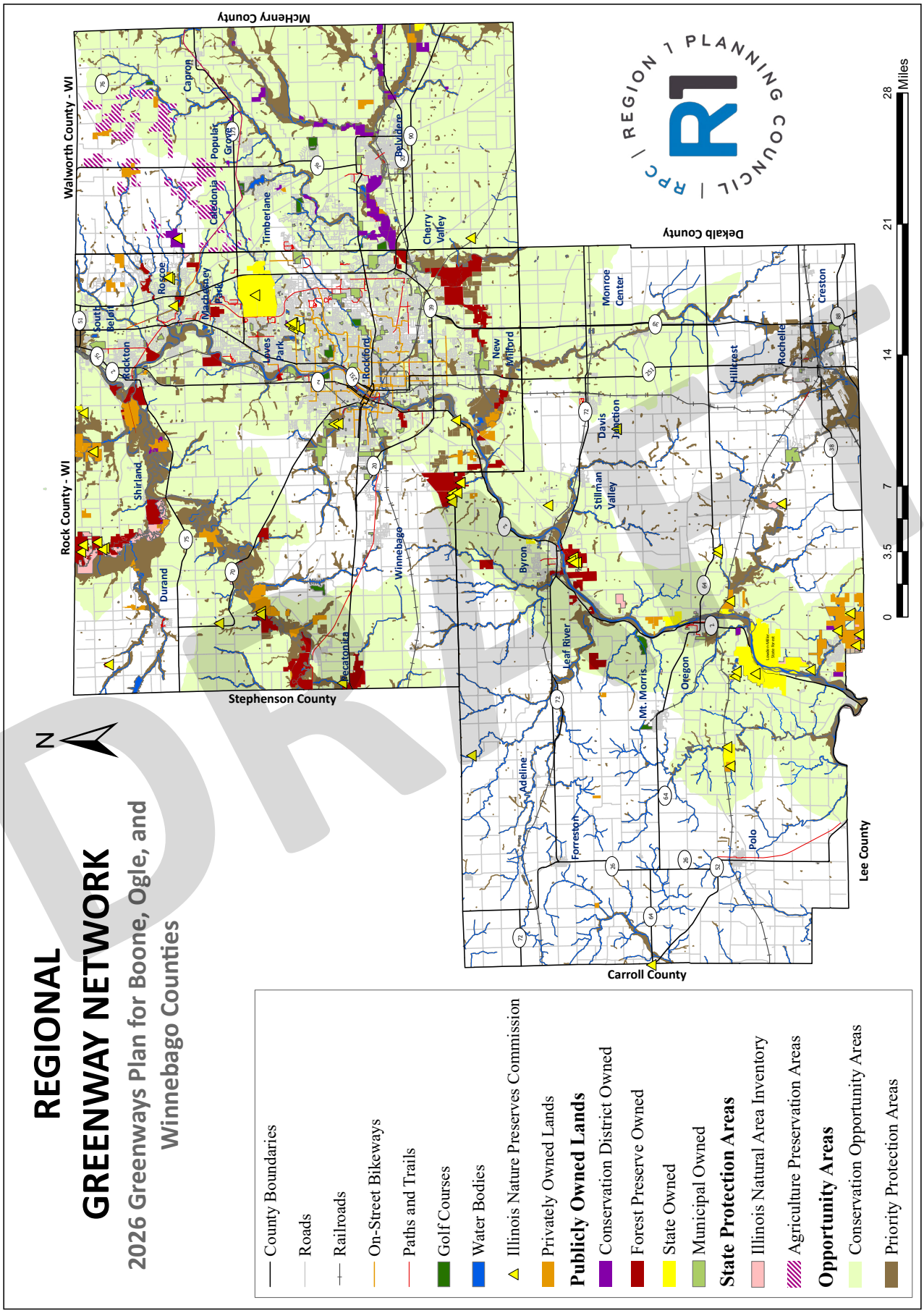
After the formal public comment period, comments were incorporated, and the document was presented to the MPO Technical Committee and the MPO Policy Committee for recommendation and adoption, respectively.



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

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Figure 5-6: Three County Green Ways Map



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Chapter 6: Regional Vision for the Future of Greenways

The development of goals and strategies for the updated Greenways Plan was centered around building off of the goals laid out in the previous document. The previous plan and its foundation allowed a framework for the R1 planners and the working group to tailor an updated list that fit the regional networks current needs. The vision for the regional greenways network faces challenges that encompass economic, environmental, and social issues that these set of goals seek to address.

The goals and strategies laid out are applicable for both public and private actors in the region. They are designed to build cooperation between private and public land owners as well as the community that uses the regional network. While land and path owners are responsible for maintaining and improving the functions of a greenway, they rely on community feedback to identify issues with conditions, connections, or services. While these were developed by various regional entities, it was done as a path for the region to follow to create the best regional network for the communities served by the network.

Goals & Strategies

1. **Protect the natural and cultural resources in the region to promote biodiversity**
    1.1. Continue to perform regular and planned natural resource inventory updates.
    1.2. Assist in the protection of environmental landscape within greenway corridors to maintain habitats, prevent invasive species from disrupting environmental functions, and enhance the connectivity of the region's natural resources.
    1.3. Support land acquisitions that maintain and expand greenway corridors to grow economic and recreational uses.
    1.4. Coordinate with historic preservation and regionally native groups to identify and protect the region's cultural resources.
2. **Increase connectivity of the non-motorized vehicle network to support alternative transportation options for the region.**
    2.1. Maintain and update inventories of existing non-motorized infrastructure networks to identify gaps in connectivity and areas where linkages between the region's amenities and resources can be created.
    2.2. Expand connections between shared-use paths, sidewalks, and trails in the region to fill gaps and create a more robust system for non-motorized users.
    2.3. Evaluate transit stops to increase their connections to greenways or other natural areas to reduce personal vehicle usage, promote multimodal travel, and reduce vehicle congestion in or near natural areas.
    2.4. Invest in amenities and pedestrian facilities such as wayfinding, benches, bike repair stations, and shelters along non-motorized corridors to support everyday use.
3. **Foster cooperation between regional partners and agencies to maintain and strengthen functionality of ecosystem services.**
    3.1. Work across jurisdictions to create a shared vision for maintaining the environmental functions of regional greenways to improve the resiliency of the region.

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3.2. Explore efforts to develop a master agreement between agencies in the region to overcome gaps in maintenance, agreements, and extensions that exist in greenway corridors falling under multiple jurisdictions.

3.3. Involve local community groups in planning initiatives to promote the residential uses of green infrastructure practices and develop greenway visions that reflect the needs of their neighborhoods.

4. **Stimulate the value of regional greenways to enhance economic opportunities.**

4.1. Develop maintenance schedules for regional partners to efficiently improve trails and shared-use paths within the regional greenway network.

4.2. Facilitate discussions between governmental agencies and the private sector for the planning and development of greenway corridors.

4.3. Promote greenways and trails as a hub for regional ecotourism and catalyze outdoor recreational business development.

5. **Bring awareness to and expand educational opportunities about the importance of greenways.**

5.1. Use the greenways map as an educational tool to bring awareness to the recreational uses of the greenways network and natural spaces in the region, as well as to their role in mitigating the impacts of environmental stressors.

5.2. Implement educational opportunities for government agencies, private companies, and community groups to cultivate a widespread understanding of the benefits of green infrastructure practices.

5.3. Establish partnerships with local community organizations to implement programs, events, and activities that encourage greenway use.

5.4. Seek opportunities to obtain funding for the performance of visitor analyses for the region's parks, trails, and forest preserves.

Implementation

The adoption and implementation of the Greenways Plan and Map continues to succeed in building a more connected greenways network throughout the region. Through adopting this plan, adhering to its outlined recommendations, and continuing to develop innovative best practices that cater to the unique needs of the community, all residents in the region can see advancements in quality of life, economic opportunity, and the preservation of the surrounding natural environment.

Collaboration

Due to the wide range of ownership of the land that comprises greenways - from federal, state, and local government to private landowners - and the many hurdles to the creation and maintenance of greenways, collaboration is vital to the successful implementation of the Greenways Plan. Fostering healthy relationships between various stakeholders can lead to the streamlining of complex processes like grant applications, land acquisition, feasibility studies, design and construction, the maintenance of trails and facilities, and education and outreach efforts. Some of the roles local stakeholders can play in fostering collaborative efforts, along with their responsibilities in ensuring effective implementation, are detailed in this section.

Federal & State Governments

While local and municipal governments have jurisdiction over local green infrastructure, federal and state governments direct funding sources and environmental targets at the national, state, and regional level. Two-way communication between the various levels of government can be facilitated through the formation of committees and councils. Additional ways that federal and state government agencies can engage in greenways planning are listed.

1. Increase the level of both federal and state funding available for greenways planning, collaboration, development, preservation, and maintenance.

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2. Continue to leverage potential grant funds for future initiatives in concert with other organizations and agencies.
3. Coordinate with federal, state, and regional committees and councils to learn about broader initiatives and to provide information on best practices.
4. Collaborate with Region 1 Planning Council (R1) in providing funding for greenways projects, working on committees, and incorporating best practices into new policy.

Region 1 Planning Council (R1)

R1 assists governments and other organizations in the Rockford Region with planning, research, grant application, community engagement, GIS, and sustainability expertise. R1 is committed to supporting the 2026 Greenways Plan and local implementation efforts and will continue its involvement in regional greenways planning in the following ways:

1. Collect, analyze, and update GIS data for natural resources, transit and transportation pathways, greenspaces, and other similar areas to support greenways planning.
2. Follow the recommendations of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to use the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) approach to transportation planning decision-making.
3. Assist in thorough environmental review processes.
4. Provide information, mapping products, or other data to regional partners to support efforts to obtain grants or complete greenways plans.
5. Address greenways planning and development through collaboration with regional partners to continue efforts set forth in this plan.

Local & County Governments

Local and county governments work to improve communities through zoning, education, research, and the creation of ordinances. Local governments can also build a collaborative environment with residents to create fair policies, address critical problem areas, and reduce inequities. The following strategies can be crucial to the successful implementation of a greenways plan.

1. Introduce and adopt the updated Greenways Plan, engage in public dialogue around the plan, use the plan to guide sustainable development and land use planning, and incorporate applicable objectives into comprehensive plans and other relevant planning documents.
2. Educate elected and appointed leaders on the benefits of, and barriers to, greenways.
3. Amend local subdivision and zoning codes to allow for conservation projects and the development of safe, accessible pathways to access greenways.
4. Establish and/or continue dialogue with community members.
5. Protect or acquire new properties where appropriate to support the greenways plan, especially those that are environmentally sensitive, could be utilized as recreational space, have cultural or historical importance to Indigenous and other groups, or address a community need.
6. Collect data about local environmental concerns, community needs, and outdoor tourism to share with regional partners.

Private Landowners

Engagement with the Greenways Plan is voluntary for private landowners, but it can bring environmental and monetary benefits. Community members' awareness of and engagement with greenways planning can increase collaboration and community satisfaction with projects.

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Many individual or neighborhood actions can be taken outside of formal partnerships with greenways projects. Suggestions for individuals or small communities are listed.

1. Learn about local ecosystems, habitats, species, and environmental issues through local programs and events or online.
2. Develop an environmental inventory or assessment in a local neighborhood. Identify tree types, shrubs, birds, water quality, and biodiversity of nearby natural spaces. Learn which species are invasive and the proper techniques to remove them.
3. Select native trees, shrubs, and plants instead of cultivars, non-native plants, or invasive species when making landscaping decisions to mitigate stormwater runoff, erosion, and/or the loss of biodiversity.

Environmental Inventories:

An environmental inventory can be forwarded to local government ans planning agencies for use in future studies, and may provide direct benefits to a neighborhood.

Education Opportunities:

Local land conservation organizations, Master Gardeners, colleges and universities, and the internet can provide opportunities to learn more about the benefits of native plantings.

4. Become familiar with how local land uses impact local environmental outcomes. Agriculture, brownfields, preserves, and urban spaces can all affect how a neighborhood's natural spaces function and are easy to spot on platforms like Google Earth or on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maps. If there is a local issue, collaborate with conservation organizations, planning agencies, governments, and other property owners to find solutions.
5. Understand the history of local land, including the Indigenous groups who have lived, and still do live, in the area.
6. Express concerns about environmental injustices, such as lack of investment in green infrastructure, flooding in disadvantaged communities, or the placement of environmentally hazardous activities.
7. Conserve privately-owned land in perpetuity through conservation easements. There are many different forms and durations of, and levels of compensation for, conserved land.

Conservation Easements:

Individuals still own the land and can limit public access, but they and subsequent owners of the property would be legally required to conserve the land as specified by the easement.

Non-Profits & Advocacy Groups

Local non-profits and advocacy groups include groups specifically dedicated to land preservation, such as land trusts, independent natural areas, community groups, and other interested parties. These organizations may possess land, grant funding, volunteer bases, or community leadership, which are vital to successful greenways planning. Organizations that are not environmentally focused, such as neighborhood groups, may also find this document useful to support their goals or create partnerships. Actions these groups can take to support greenways are listed below.

1. Collaborate with local governments, developers, planning agencies, Indigenous organizations, environmental organizations, and other groups to protect and restore the region's flora and fauna and ensure proper access to resources.
2. Develop public engagement, workshops, tours, and recreational programs to provide educational opportunities to the community.
3. Capitalize on shared conservation goals by establishing or strengthening relationships with corporations, educational institutions, hospitals, and local businesses that own property.
4. Continue acquiring new conservation land and working to connect the region's natural spaces, prioritizing underserved populations.
5. Where possible, collect data on visitors, economic impacts, biodiversity, environmental concerns, ecosystem function, and other relevant metrics, and share this information with local and regional partners.

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Corporate Landowners

Whether on greenfields, brownfields, or existing sites, renovations and new developments present opportunities to incorporate resilient infrastructure and sustainable development. There are several ways corporations can be involved in greenway development, including the ones below.

1. Build partnerships for habitat management and green space preservation with the region's land trusts and advocacy groups.
2. Educate and incentivize employees to live healthier lifestyles so current employees are healthier and happier and future employees are encouraged to work for the corporation.
3. Establish a corporate-sponsored grant program to support local conservation and restoration projects that can be used to advertise the value of the corporation to the community.

Linear Corridor Landowners

Linear corridors are typically privately owned and not used for recreational purposes. They include utility corridors, rights-of-way along roads, transportation corridors, riparian corridors, and railroads, all of which offer various habitat types and are regularly utilized by local species. Some of the ways owners of linear corridors can support greenways are below.

1. Partner with local organizations on repurposing linear land corridors as recreational or preserved land.
2. Outline a plan to clean waste from linear corridors and maintain them as habitat or wildlife corridors.
3. Collaborate with state and municipal governments to improve landscaping and conservation standards for new roadway and other linear corridor construction projects.
4. Expand sidewalk networks while improvement projects are underway, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Funding Sources

One of the most difficult parts of successfully implementing the Greenways Plan will be finding sufficient funding sources to support various projects. R1 has compiled a list of sources that fund a wide variety of projects that could support the goals and strategies outlined in this plan. Currently, private foundations provide the largest number of grant programs and support the widest variety of project types. Table 6-1 identifies some of the more prominent and relevant funding sources that are currently available; however, it is not comprehensive. It is recommended that individuals and groups seeking to apply for funding to support their projects conduct further research to identify programs that best align with their values, goals, and needs.

Table 6-1: Available Funding Sources

State

Grantor	Program Name	Award Amount	Application Period	Eligible Projects	Eligibility	Link
Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)	Special Wildlife Funds	$10,000-$300,000	Multiple programs with differing deadlines	Projects designated exclusively for the preservation and maintenance of high-quality habitat lands for wildlife	Land Managers: Government, Education, and Non-Profit Organizations	https://dnr.illinois.gov/grants.html

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Grantor	Program Name	Award Amount	Application Period	Eligible Projects	Eligibility	Link
Illinois EPA (IEPA)	Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO)	$75,000-$2,500,000	Late Months of Year	Green infrastructure projects minimizing stormwater runoff; including bioinfiltration, retention, floodplain reconnection, or wetland creation	Any Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Pre-Qualified entity that can legally accept funds from the State of Illinois	https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/water-financial-assistance/gigo.html
IDNR	Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program	Up to $200,000 (50% State Match)	Early Months of Year, Every Other Year	Acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of public, non-motorized bicycle paths and directly-related support facilities.	Units of local government authorized by Illinois law to expend public funds	https://dnr.illinois.gov/grants/bikepathprogram.html
IDNR (Via FHWA)	Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	Up to $200,000 (80% Federal Match)	Early Months of Year	Acquisition, development, and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreational trails	Federal, state, and local governments, non-profits, and private owners of motorized recreational facilities	https://dnr.illinois.gov/aeg/federal-recreationaltrail-sprogram.html
Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)	Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)	Up to $5,000,000 (Match % Varies)	Late Summer - Early Fall, Every Other Year	Well-planned smaller scale, but critically important projects that provide and support connected alternate modes of transportation	Entities with taxing authority recognized by IDOT as a Local Public Agency registered through SAM.gov to accept a federal grant	https://idot.illinois.gov/programs-and-projects/trails-and-active-transportation/itep.html

Private Foundation

Grantor	Program Name	Award Amount	Application Period	Eligible Projects	Eligibility	Link
The Conservation Alliance	The Conservation Alliance General Fund	Up to $100,000	Year-Round	Projects that prioritize natural resource management, climate adaptation, indigenous and marginalized community rights, and habitat protection in areas that also provide recreational opportunities	Non-Profit Organizations and Indigenous Tribes	https://conservationalliance.com/grants/

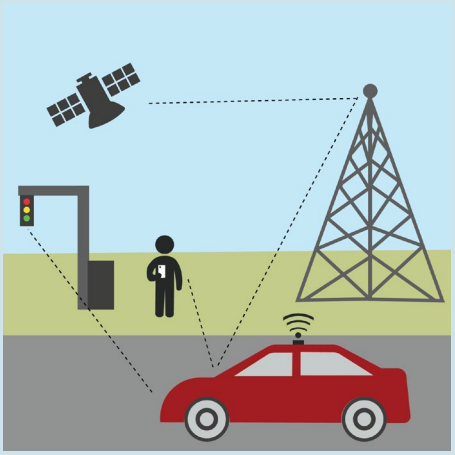
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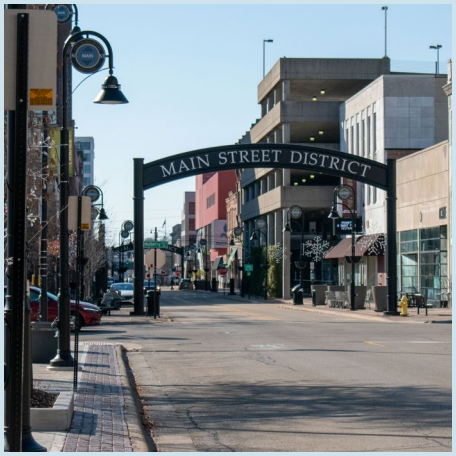
Grantor	Program Name	Award Amount	Application Period	Eligible Projects	Eligibility	Link
Network for Landscape Conservation	Catalyst Fund	$25,000 per year for up to 2 years	Early Months of Year	Landscape-scale projects with extensive collaboration	Non-Profit Organizations and Indigenous-led partnerships	https://landscape-conservation.org/catalyst-fund/
Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF)	FTPF Grant Program	In-Kind Materials	Year-Round	Planting fruit tree orchards using high-quality supplies	Non-Profits, Non-Government Organizations, Public Schools, or Government Entities supporting a charitable purpose	https://www.ftpf.org/apply
Patagonia	Patagonia Grants	Typically $5,000-$20,000	One proposal per group per year	Grassroots activist organizations that have direct-action agendas and are working on strategic, multipronged campaigns to preserve and protect the environment	Grassroots Activist Organizations	https://www.patagonia.com/how-we-fund/
Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC)	RTC Trail Grants Program	$10,000-$25,000	Spring	Projects that support the planning, construction, improvement and maintenance of trails and trail networks. Eligible activities: Feasibility studies, mapping, design, construction, and matching funds for state or federal grants	Organizations at all levels, from local and national non-profits to public agencies	https://www.railstotrails.org/grants/

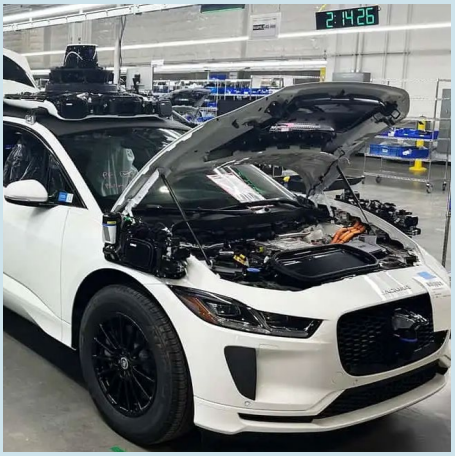
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Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Plan

Part 1: Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Guidance

Final Report | 10.30.2026

Chapter 1: Introduction

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) Plan is to prepare the Rockford Region for the potential widespread adoption of advanced self-driving technology for road-using vehicles. The development of CAV technologies has the potential to deliver many benefits in terms of improving the safety and efficiency of the transportation system; however, it may also require new and upgraded infrastructure in order to fully realize these positive outcomes. In addition, it is necessary to prepare for CAVs in a manner that recognizes the uncertainty around the pace and extent of CAV rollout and the need to preserve capacity for legacy vehicles. The intended audience for the CAV Plan is the public, transportation professionals, automobile and technology companies, and local politicians and decision-makers within the Rockford Region.

Potential Benefits of CAVs

Safety: CAVs have the ability to prevent or reduce the number of crashes by taking preemptive actions to entirely avoid a crash or reduces its severity.

Mobility: CAVs allow drivers to make real-time decisions to cut travel time delays caused by congestion, improve travel time reliability, and increase the opportunity for multimodal connections. They would also enable operators to manage network performance in order to increase efficiency for transit vehicles and freight.

Environment: Technologies for CAVs can generate travel data in order to inform and support environmental targets aimed at reductions in fuel consumption and emissions. Additionally, improved CAV technology can help avoid unnecessary braking, idling, and stops, all of which affect fuel efficiency.

Plan Structure

The CAV Plan will comprise of two parts: Part 1. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Guidance and Part 2. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Readiness Assessment. This document is Part 1 of the Plan, and the preparation of Part 2 will commence immediately following the adoption of Part 1. While published as two separate documents, both parts are designed to constitute a single CAV Plan for the Rockford Region.

Phase 0. Project Scoping (2025)

In this phase, the project's goals, objectives, and timeline were defined. This phase took place prior to project kick-off on January 1, 2026.

Phase 1. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Guidance (2026)

Part 1. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Guidance involves data collection and analysis—specifically, research into current and predicted state of CAV technology; an analysis of existing federal, state, and local CAV policy, law, and guidelines, as well as planning efforts elsewhere in the country; and an overview of the existing conditions of the Rockford Region's roadways. Part 1 of the Plan is intended to raise awareness about CAVs, provide a broad strategy framework for CAV planning in the Rockford MPA, and set the foundations for future planning efforts, including Part 2 of the CAV Plan.

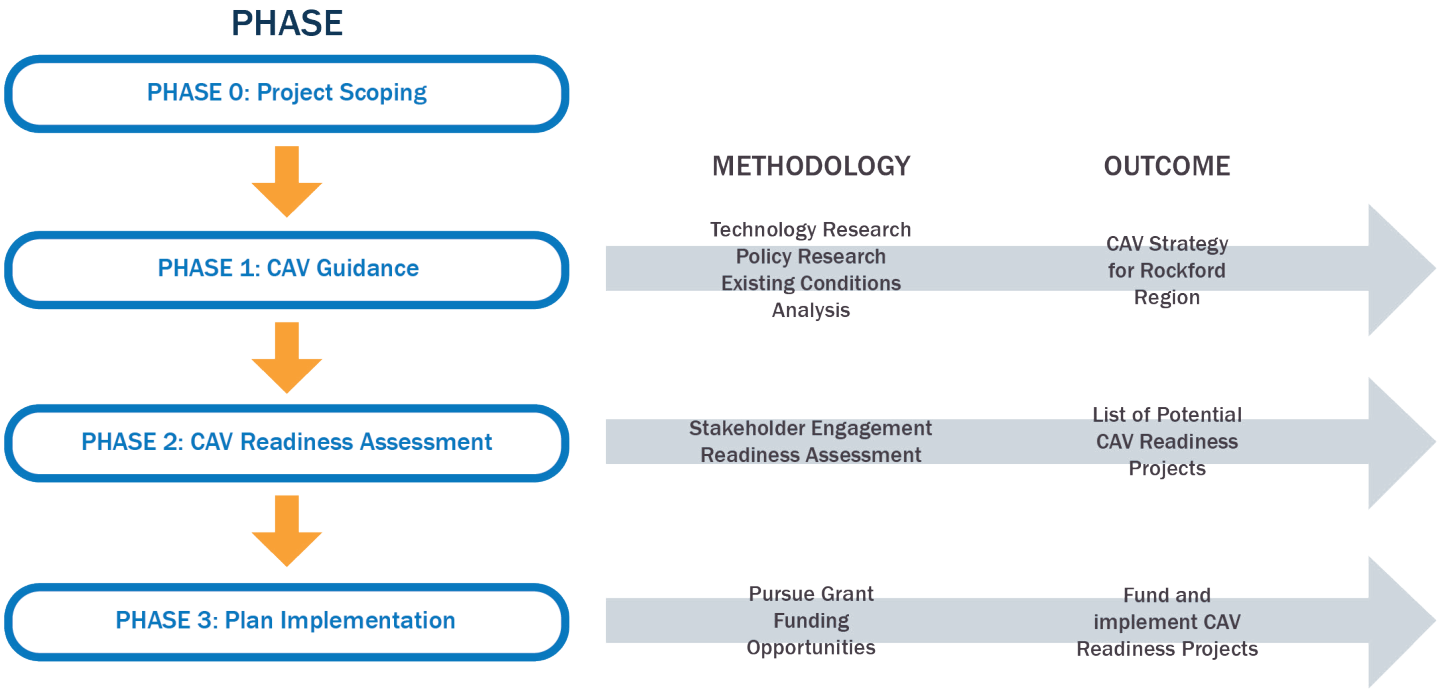
Phase 2. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Readiness Assessment (2027)

Part 2. Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Readiness Assessment, will have two components. The first is stakeholder and community engagement with transportation professionals and the public, and the second is an analysis of the major roadways in the region using a scoring system to assess how ready they are for widespread CAV use. Part 2 of the CAV Plan is intended to provide recommendations for transportation projects which would be easy to implement, cost effective, and impactful in order to prepare the region to accommodate wider CAV usage, as well as to present options for grant funding opportunities for CAV projects.

Phase 3. Plan Implementation (2027+)

While the CAV Plan is due to officially conclude on December 31, 2027, with the adoption of Part 2, implementation will be an ongoing effort starting from the publication of Part 1 and moving through the five-year plan period and beyond. Phase 3 will involve the implementation of the strategies outlined in Chapter 6 of Part 1 via the Action Plan included in Appendix B, as well as the pursuit of grant funding opportunities—in particular the Advanced Transportation Technologies and Innovation (ATTAIN) program funding—for the potential CAV readiness projects identified in Part 2 of the CAV Plan. Phase 3 will also involve monitoring the state of CAV technology and ensuring that the CAV Plan is amended or updated periodically in order to reflect pace of the development of the technology as well as the uptake among the general public and businesses.

Figure 1-1: CAV Plan Development Process



Definitions & Terminology

Connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) are an emerging technology, and therefore the terminology used can be complicated and confusing for those not familiar with the industry.[i] As the name implies, connected and autonomous vehicles are vehicles which utilize two separate and distinct technologies. While the two technologies are not necessarily co-dependent—for example, an autonomous vehicle does not necessarily need to also be a connected vehicle—it is typical for modern vehicles to use both technologies to varying degrees. Therefore the terminology "CAV" has been adopted to refer to all modern vehicles which utilize some form of self-driving technologies.

Connected Vehicles

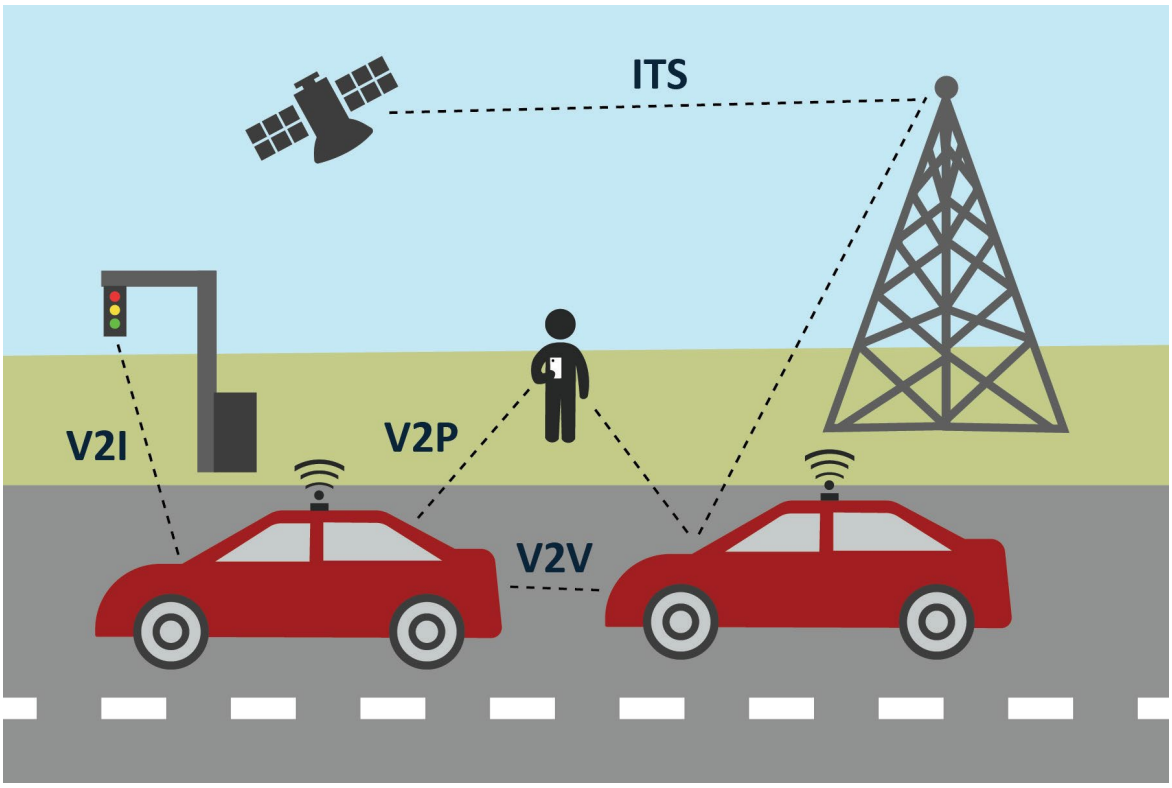
Connected vehicles (CVs) are vehicles which utilize wireless technologies to communicate with other vehicles, with infrastructure, and with mobile devices.[ii] There are many technologies which can be used to facilitate this connectivity, including cellular broadband network, Wi-Fi, satellite communications, Bluetooth, and dedicated short-range communications (DSRC), some of which are already utilized in vehicles. The devices used to enable communication are known as on-board units (OBUs). Presently, these technologies are primarily used for functions within the vehicle, such as navigation and media, but it is expected that in the future, with more reliable connections and wider adoption, such wireless connectivity could be used to assist in self-driving and traffic management. This concept of interoperability between vehicles, traffic infrastructure, and mobile devices is expected to enhance road safety and achieve the Vision Zero target promoted by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).[iii]

A suite of terminology has been developed to refer to the various possible connections that vehicles can make.

Table 1-1: Vehicle Connectivity Terminology

Term	Definition
V2V: Vehicle to Vehicle	V2V technology allows vehicles to communicate with other vehicles. Such connected vehicles can share real-time information such as position on the roadway, speed, and braking status in order to improve the flow and traffic and reduce the risk of collision.
V2I: Vehicle to Infrastructure	V2I technology allows vehicles to communicate with traffic infrastructure such as traffic signals, cameras, road signage, and parking meters. V2I technology will require legacy infrastructure to be upgraded to intelligent transportation systems (ITS) through the use of roadside units (RSUs). The benefits of V2I will be in traffic management and safety; for example, traffic signals could have their cycles altered in order to respond to traffic conditions.
V2P: Vehicle to Pedestrian	V2P technology makes connected vehicles aware of pedestrians and cyclists by connecting with their mobile device. V2P is dependent on pedestrians carrying a mobile device and therefore cannot entirely be relied on for safety purposes. However, it can be a useful tool when combined with other technologies.
V2X: Vehicle to Everything	V2X is the gold standard of CV technology and combines all of the previous connections described. V2X is ambitious but will likely be required in order to achieve the more advanced stages of self-driving which the automobile industry is striving towards. Figure 1-2 displays how the various communications in V2X would operate.

Figure 1-2: V2X Communication



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Autonomous Vehicles

An autonomous vehicle (AV) refers to a vehicle where some functions are undertaken without direct input from the driver.[iv] Autonomous vehicle functions are controlled via the vehicle's on-board computer, utilizing various instruments and sensors which allow the vehicle to operate independently (i.e., without connectivity to other vehicles or devices). Numerous technologies can be deployed to allow the vehicle to sense the physical environment, such as cameras, radar, LiDAR, and ultrasonic wave emitters. Generally, some combination of these methods is required in order to form a reliable and accurate picture. The terms "autonomous vehicle" and "automated vehicle" are generally used interchangeably to refer to the same thing, and the industry has not yet adopted a standardized terminology. As with connectivity, a degree of automation is already in use in vehicles currently produced today; however, as will be described in forthcoming chapters, it is expected that vehicles will become increasingly autonomous, with more and more functions able to operate without driver intervention.

Image 1-1: Waymo Autonomous Vehicle



Image Source: Axios

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) is a framework which utilizes a suite of technologies to help to manage the transportation network.[v] The concept is not new and does not necessarily entail cutting-edge technology; ITS applications are already widely used for highway automation such as active traffic management, traffic signals synchronization, and satellite navigation.[vi] However, advances in wireless technologies promise to significantly enhance the capabilities of ITS in terms of improving road safety and reducing traffic congestion. Roadside units (RSUs) are wireless devices which are installed on physical traffic infrastructure to allow for real-time monitoring, traffic management, and enforcement; when combined with vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I)–enabled CAVs, they have the potential to provide transportation authorities with unprecedented data on how vehicles are using the road network. In addition, it is expected that further advances in artificial intelligence (AI) will allow for the rapid processing of this data to devise strategies to improve the safety and capacity of the system. Essentially, ITS can be considered as the sister technology to CAVs which will help to realize their full potential on the network scale.

Image 1-2: Roadside Unit



Image Source: Siemens

Study Area

The CAV Plan geographically encompasses the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), which is the planning jurisdiction of the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Region 1 Planning Council (R1). The MPA boundary is developed by R1 in partnership with local jurisdictions, local stakeholders, the State, and the MPO Policy Committee. The MPO helps coordinate transportation planning and improvement activities throughout the MPA. This is accomplished through communication and cooperation of Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle County officials serving on the MPO Policy Committee, MPO Technical Committee, and Alternative Transportation Selection Committee.

The MPA boundary covers portions of Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties. In total, the MPA boundary is approximately 682.32 square miles, and serves 323,738 people per the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-year estimate. Figure 1-3 depicts the current MPA boundary.

Chapter 6: CAV Strategy

The CAV Strategy for the Rockford Region has to balance the potential benefits of being an early adopter of connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) technologies against the uncertainty about the pace and extent of the CAV rollout and the need to retain capacity and investment in traditional vehicle infrastructure. Region 1 Planning Council (R1) has therefore devised a proactive, forward-looking CAV Strategy which will place the Rockford Region in a good position to be ready for the CAV rollout without requiring excessive public investment or radical alterations to the roadway system. The purpose of the strategies outlined in this chapter are to inform the approach taken to CAV planning by R1 and other transportation agencies in the Rockford Region. In particular, these strategies will form the basis for Part 2 of the CAV Plan, which will use them to make strategic and targeted recommendations for how to prepare the region's roadways for CAVs.

Strategy Overview

The goal of the CAV Plan is to prepare the Rockford Region for a potential significant modal shift from legacy vehicles to CAVs in the medium to long term. Based upon the research conducted for Part 1 of the CAV Plan, in order achieve this goal, the following strategies are recommended:

Table 6-1: Strategies

Strategy	Outcome
1. CAV Awareness	To foster and improve CAV awareness in the Rockford Region
2. Policy Framework	To develop a policy framework for making planning and transportation decisions relating to CAV's in the Rockford Region.
3. Roadway Infrastructure Improvements	To identify opportunities for roadway infrastructure improvements in the Rockford Region.
4. Communications Infrastructure Improvements	To identify opportunities for communications infrastructure improvements in the Rockford Region.
5. Fleet Upgrades	To identify opportunities to upgrade the vehicle fleet in the Rockford Region to include more CAVs with higher levels of automation.

The following section describes each of these strategies in detail. Appendix B provides an Action Plan which prescribes steps which should be taken in order to deliver these strategies. This chapter also includes a description of the estimated timelines involved and the delivery partners responsible for implementing the CAV strategies.



Strategy 1: CAV Awareness

Timeline: **Short-term.**

Delivery Partners: **R1 Staff, MPO Technical Committee, MPO Policy Committee, Local Transportation Agencies, Community Groups, the General Public**

In order to prepare the Rockford Region for CAVs, it is vital to raise awareness of what CAVs are, how they work, and their potential benefits within the region. It is expected that better understanding of this technology will allow decision-makers, transportation professionals, and the general public to make informed choices about how to engage with CAVs. R1 has identified various groups and actions to promote CAV awareness. The two-part CAV planning process is intended to provide multiple opportunities to promote CAV awareness amongst the various groups in the short term, while implementation of the CAV Plan will involve raising awareness of CAVs on an ongoing basis.

In pursuing Strategy 1, R1 will adopt a "technology neutral" position with regard to CAVs and will not promote one transportation technology over another.[i] The purpose of Strategy 1 is to educate and inform the public and stakeholders about CAVs and to foster a constructive conversation about how they might be incorporated into the region's transportation networks, rather than to attempt to "sell" CAVs as the transportation technology of the future.

Strategy 2: Policy Framework

Timeline: **Short-term.**

Delivery Partners: **R1 Staff, Local Transportation Agencies, Local Planning Departments, State Representatives, IDOT, U.S. DOT**

In conjunction with the applicable national and state CAV polices outlined in Chapter 5 of this document, the CAV Plan is intended to act as the primary resource for CAV transportation planning in the Rockford Region. The strategies outlined in this section of Part 1 of the CAV Plan are designed as guidance to inform transportation related decisions relevant to CAVs in the Rockford Region, whereas Part 2 will suggest projects which could help to prepare the region for wider CAV adoption. The purpose of this Plan is not, therefore, to directly legislate local CAV policy, but to act as a resource for other local government bodies within the region to use when considering their own transportation policies relevant to CAVs. The CAV Plan will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that it remains up-to-date and reflective of the developing state of the CAV industry.

Future CAV policy should be cognizant of and informed by the developing state of CAV technology and the public's attitude towards CAVs. As outlined in Chapter 2 of this document, the more ambitious industry predictions about the development of Level 4 and 5 automated vehicles within the next few years now seems unlikely, and it may be decades before full self-driving cars come to market. However, in the meantime vehicles are likely to be sold with more and more automated features and capabilities, and the Rockford Region's CAV policy should be reflective of this gradual and incremental approach.

CAV policy in the Rockford Region also needs to be mindful of the issue of public safety. While improved road safety is one of the biggest potential benefits of widespread CAV technology and early indications do appear to indicate that CAVs are safer than human drivers,[ii] it also must be acknowledged that CAVs can still pose a safety risk to other vehicles and pedestrians due to a number of potential variables from technology failures to extreme weather. Collisions involving CAVs which result in injury or fatalities are likely to have an impact on public perception of CAVs even if on average they are safer than human drivers, and the legal framework to attribute liability for such incidents is still underdeveloped. It is therefore recommended that any policy in the Rockford Region which might permit the use of more advanced stages of automation (Levels 3-5) exercise the precautionary principle in order to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the technology adopts the highest standards of safety and does not prioritize the safety of CAV passengers over that of other road users.

Strategy 3: Roadway Infrastructure Improvements

Timeline: **Medium to Long-term.**

Delivery Partners: **R1 Staff, Local Transportation Agencies, IDOT**

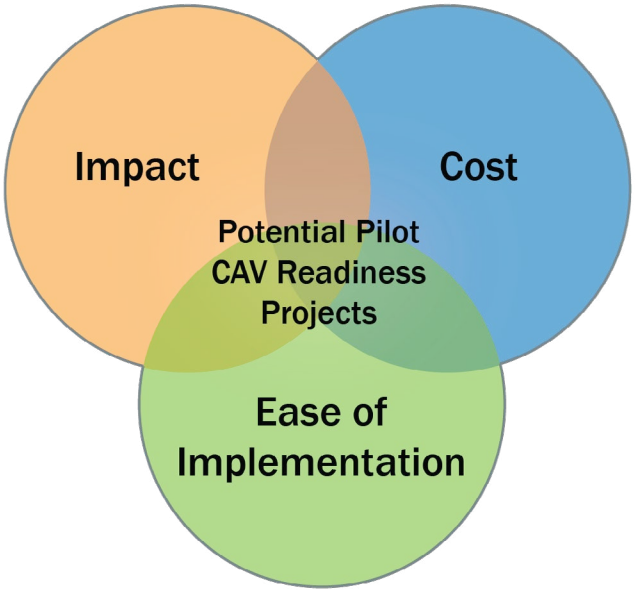
The most significant part of the CAV Strategy relates to physical improvements which can be made to the Rockford Region's roadway infrastructure in order to make it more suitable for widespread CAV usage. As described in previous chapters, there are a number of infrastructure improvements which can be made, including the installation of roadside units (RSUs) in traffic infrastructure, increased maintenance of roadway markings, and improvements to roadway geometries and intersection layouts to ensure compliance with national standards and best practice. R1's strategy for assessing CAV readiness improvements in the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is to focus on three criteria:

Table 6-2: CAV Readiness Project Assessment Criteria

Criteria
1. Impact Which projects would have the most significant impact in terms of preparing the Rockford Region's transportation network for the widespread adoption of CAVs?
2. Ease of Implementation Which projects would be easiest to implement in terms of securing funding, securing the agreement of the relevant stakeholders, minimizing the impact on traditional road users, and avoiding constraints?
3. Cost Which projects are the least expensive?

In considering potential CAV readiness projects, only projects which meet all three criteria will be promoted or considered as a candidate for Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) funding, as displayed in Figure 6-1.

Figure 6-1: CAV Readiness Project Assessment Tool



Part 2 of the CAV Plan will primarily involve a CAV Readiness Assessment of the region's key roadways, which will give the roads a CAV readiness score based on how well they accord with various criteria which make a road suitable for widespread CAV usage. The CAV Readiness Assessment will provide useful data on which roadways are currently in a good position in terms of CAV readiness and could potentially be used for pilot introductions of more advanced CAV technology, and which roadways are not well prepared for CAV usage and might require investment.



Strategy 4: Communications Infrastructure Improvements

Timeline: **Medium-term.**

Delivery Partners: **R1 Staff, Local Transportation Agencies, Local Planning Departments, Mobile Network Operators, Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**

The connected element of CAVs relies heavily on widespread coverage and good reliability of wireless communications technologies. A vital component of the CAV Strategy will therefore be to support the expansion of wireless communication infrastructure in the Rockford Region.

Some wireless communications, for example Global Positioning System (GPS), are owned and operated by public bodies, but the majority of the most widely-used systems are provided by a range of competing private companies with varying levels of service coverage. Strategy 4 recommends that R1 and other transportation organizations within the Rockford Region work with both private organizations and government bodies to support and expand coverage of the various wireless communications networks through the installation of wireless infrastructure, particularly infrastructure which supports wireless communications along the region's roadway network.

The Rockford Region is well placed to ensure the highest standards of connectivity. The region does not have many hills or tall buildings which can interfere with signal, and therefore individual cellular sites are able to maximize their utility, avoiding the need for excessive infrastructure. 5G and dedicated short-range communications (DSRC) all have relatively short range and therefore require more physical infrastructure in the form of antennas or RSUs than previous generations of wireless communication technologies. Strategy 4 supports the widespread rollout of RSUs throughout the region's transportation infrastructure and continued maintenance and expansion of the region's roadside cell network.



Strategy 5: Fleet Upgrades

Timeline: **Long-term.**

Delivery Partners: **R1 Staff, Local Transportation Agencies, Local Transit Providers, CAV Manufacturers, Freight Operators**

It is currently unclear how quickly and to what extent CAVs will be adopted by individuals for their private vehicles, and this will depend on both the pace of the development of the technology and how well the industry is able to market the technology and convince consumers to purchase CAVs. R1 will adopt the U.S. government's "technology neutral" approach to CAV technology.[iii] Notwithstanding private automobiles, there are potentially widespread benefits to CAV adoption for public transit vehicles, emergency vehicles, taxis/rideshare, and freight and delivery vehicles in the Rockford Region. The adoption of CAV technology into any of the vehicles fleets mentioned below would

require extensive stakeholder and public engagement in order to address any concerns and ensure the buy-in of the local community.

Public Transit

Public transit vehicles, specifically buses, operate on a fixed route with only minor deviations in the case of road closures, and therefore are an excellent candidate for early adoption of CAV technologies. This is important because it creates a closed environment where road and communications infrastructure can be upgraded in order to allow for advanced CAV use, without the possibility that the vehicle will stray far from the route and into an area which is not suitable for CAVs. CAV technologies have the potential to hugely improve the reliability of buses by adjusting their speed to ensure arrival at the correct time and to prevent bunching, thus making them a more appealing option and promoting the use of public transit. There are, however, still significant financial, operational, maintenance, and liability challenges associated with transitioning a bus fleet to CAVs which would need to be resolved before such a transition could be undertaken, and it is not likely that driverless buses are possible in the time period that this Plan encompasses.

Emergency Services

For emergency vehicles, the use of emergency vehicle preemption (EVP) systems at traffic signals are currently playing a role in reducing response times, and it is expected that CAVs will offer additional opportunities to increase the efficiency of emergency vehicles in responding to incidents. However, as with buses, it is not expected that emergency vehicles will be able to go driverless as they are often required to not adhere to traffic laws, whereas CAVs are designed to adhere strictly to traffic regulations except to avoid collision.

Taxis/Rideshares

With regard to taxis and rideshare, many companies are already on the vanguard of utilizing CAV technologies. An increasing number of cities in the U.S. have already granted licenses for the operation of driverless taxi ("robotaxi") services, with many other cities both nationally and internationally in discussions to bring service to their jurisdiction. While smaller urban areas such as Rockford are unlikely to be included in these initial waves of rollout, R1 will monitor these early adopters on the basis that Rockford would be a good candidate for these services due to its standardized and under-capacity road network.[iv]

Freight

Finally, freight and delivery vehicles also present a good opportunity for the early adoption of CAV technologies in the Rockford Region because they often operate on fixed routes (in the case of freight) or in a small, clearly-defined area (in the case of delivery). Given its status as a freight transportation hub, Rockford could be well placed to trial the use of CAV technologies in these vehicles. Autonomous delivery robots, which travel at very slow speeds and use the sidewalk rather than the roadway, may be the first stepping stone towards autonomous vehicles in the Rockford Region. However, while autonomous delivery robots are already deployed neighboring Chicago, the lack of density in Rockford may act against the use of these products, as their slow speed makes it impractical to cover large distances.

Timeline

Due to the uncertainty regarding the speed and extent of the development of CAV technology, it is prudent to provide a broad overview of CAV planning over an extended timeline. The CAV Plan is expected to cover a five-year period (the Plan period), but beyond that it is important to consider how CAV technology might progress and what planning responses might be required. This section considers CAV planning over a short-, medium-, and long-term timeline.

Short-Term (0-5 Years)

The CAV Plan period is expected to be an approximately five-year cycle. The strategies included in this chapter and the Action Plan outlined in Appendix B have been designed to be relevant over the five-year period of 2026-2031. By the end of this period, it is expected that vehicles operating with either Level 1 or Level 2 capabilities will account for over half of car sales globally.[v] Robotaxi and delivery services using higher levels of automation are expected to expand into more and more cities. During this period, the Rockford Region should make targeted and limited investments in upgrading its road and telecommunications infrastructure to prepare for wider CAV usage. This may involve identifying a pilot project for limited CAV introduction or pursing ATTAIN or other grant funding opportunities for projects which prepare the region's roadways or telecommunications network for wider CAV adoption.

Medium-Term (5-10 Years)

The CAV Plan will be reviewed following its five-year plan period, and if necessary an updated CAV Plan will be produced. By 2035 it is expected that approximately 4 percent of the new cars sold in the United States will have Level 3 self-driving capabilities,[vi] and therefore it is likely that Level 3-capable vehicles will be present on the Rockford Region's roadways. When mixed with the existing legacy vehicles and CAVs with lower levels of automation already in circulation, this will amount to a very small number of Level 3 vehicles on the road; however, the change will be significant and is likely to inform the public perception of self-driving cars. The transportation planning response to this is likely to be the formalization of policies relating to CAVs and more regular and widespread infrastructure improvements.

Long-Term (10+ Years)

It is very difficult to predict how CAV technology will look in the long term, although it remains possible that fully self-driving vehicles (Levels 4-5) will be produced for the consumer market within the next few decades. Similarly, it is difficult to envisage what kind of transportation planning response this might require, but if the technological optimists are correct and the higher levels of automation become widespread, transportation planning in the Rockford Region might involve the full rollout of a comprehensive intelligent transportation system (ITS), with significant reductions in traffic accidents and congestion as a result. On the other hand, if the technology fails to advance or is unaffordable for the average American, the region may see Levels 4-5 CAVs using the roadway as rare curiosities, similar to high-end sports cars today, with legacy vehicles and CAVs with lower levels of automation remaining dominant. Such an eventuality would require a much lower level of input from a transportation planning perspective. Consistent monitoring of the development of CAV technology and its progress and adoption will allow the Rockford Region to be prepared for and respond to either eventuality.

Agency Responsibilities

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Region, R1 is responsible for long-range transportation planning and considering transportation alternatives and emerging technologies, and it is therefore the responsibility of R1 to take the lead on CAV planning in Rockford in the short term. Developing this CAV Plan will be a catalyst for bringing other local agencies into the CAV planning process, particularly Part 2 of the Plan, which will involve stakeholder engagement with local transportation agencies. Should CAVs become more widely adopted in the long term, it is expected that much of the responsibility for CAV planning will shift towards local and state road authorities, such as city public works departments, county highway departments, and state departments of transportation (DOTs). In the meantime, however, CAV planning will largely be carried out by R1 staff in collaboration with local transportation agencies and the public of the Rockford Region. In addition, there is a role for the private sector, particularly CAV manufacturers and operators, to play in ensuring the region is adequately prepared for the introduction of vehicles capable of higher levels of automation. R1 will engage with any companies seeking to introduce vehicles with Level 3 automation or above into the Rockford Region whether for pilot project, private sale, or commercial use.

Funding Opportunities

The main funding opportunity for which Part 2 of the CAV Plan will seek to identify candidate projects is the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Advanced Transportation Technologies and Innovation (ATTAIN) grant. This program is currently supported under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which was due to expire on the 30th of September 2026, although this has been extended until December 11th. It should be noted that reauthorization may result in changes to funding programs, funding levels, and project requirements. During the period of the IIJA (2022-2026), the ATTAIN grant provided $60 million per year to projects which deploy, install, or operate advanced technologies to improve safety, mobility, efficiency, system performance, intermodal connectivity, and infrastructure return on investment.[vii] ATTAIN funding is allocated to between five and 10 projects per year and can cover up to 80 percent of the total project cost. Part 2 of the CAV Plan should identify projects proposed by regional partners which may be eligible for ATTAIN funding, as well as consider if any new projects could be sponsored by R1 to help prepare the Rockford Region for CAVs. Full details of the ATTAIN funding program are included in Appendix C.



REGION 1 PLANNING COUNCIL | RPC | R1

Green Streets Guide

Final Report | October 2026

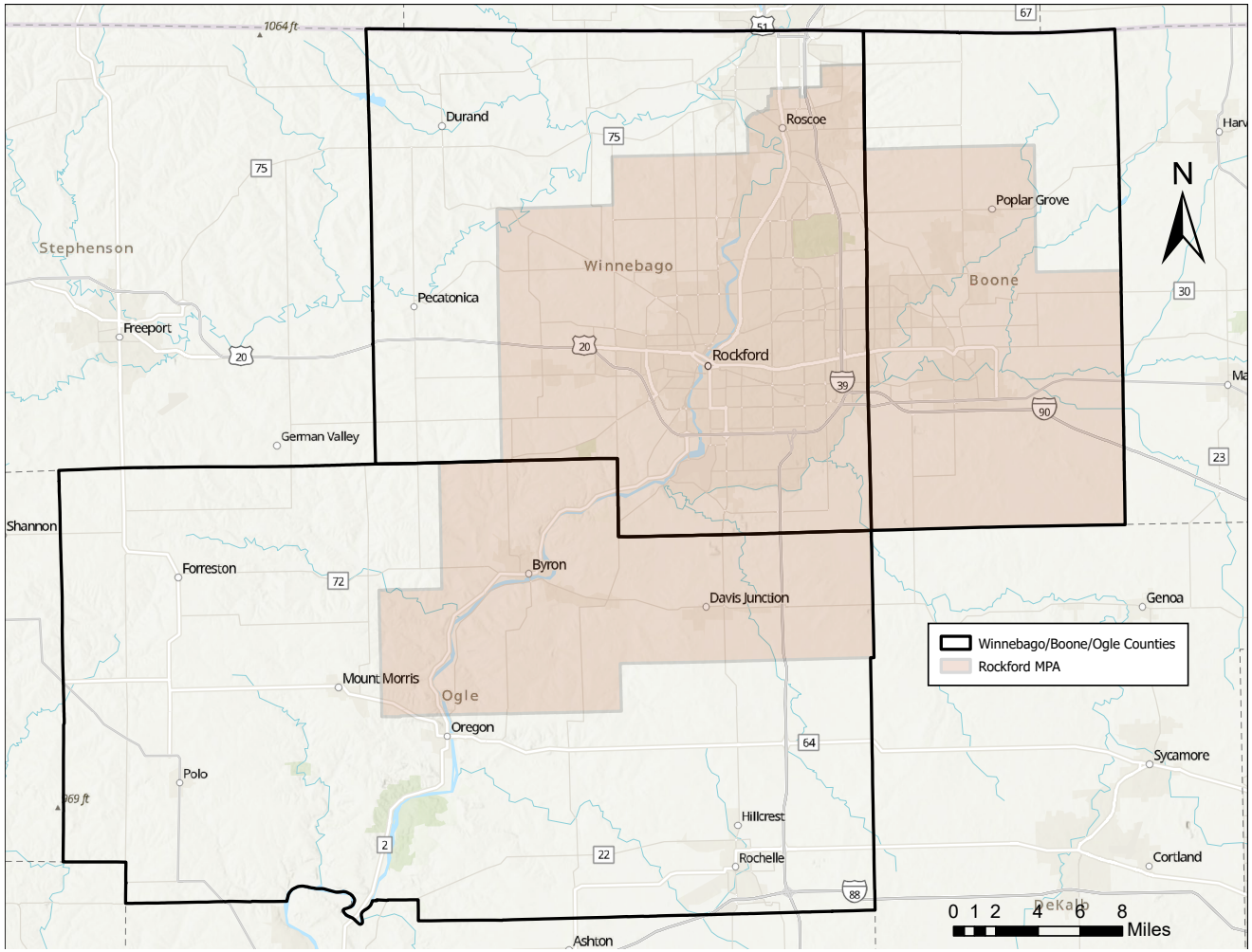
Chapter 1: Building Greener Streets

This Green Streets Guide aims to transform the Rockford Region's streetscapes into green, resilient spaces by integrating stormwater management features such as permeable pavement, rain gardens, and street trees. Paired with active transportation infrastructure and aesthetic elements, green streets can reduce the infrastructural consequences of flooding, enhance neighborhood livability, and support multiple modes of transportation.

Region 1 Planning Council (R1) has developed this Green Streets Guide for the Rockford Region as a resource to help municipalities and stakeholders design streetscapes that are resilient, sustainable, and multimodal. R1 serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Rockford Region, supporting sustainable transportation, land use, and infrastructure planning across its metropolitan planning area (MPA), which includes a majority of Winnebago and Boone counties and the northern portion of Ogle County.

Investing in flood-resilient infrastructure benefits the Rockford Region by improving pavement durability, enhancing neighborhood aesthetics, and maintaining safe and accessible conditions for pedestrians and cyclists as increasingly frequent and intense severe weather events place greater stress on transportation infrastructure. Implementing green street elements into streetscape design standards will improve regional resiliency and support a better quality of life for all residents.

Figure 1-1: Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

What Are Green Streets?

Green streets incorporate sustainable design into streetscapes, primarily to manage stormwater through green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) that filter runoff and reduce flooding. There are a variety of types of green infrastructure BMPs that can be considered for inclusion in streetscape design guidelines across the Rockford Region, including bioretention areas, bioswales, permeable pavements, planter boxes, native vegetation, and street trees.

To be considered a green street, a roadway must intentionally integrate stormwater management and environmental enhancement strategies into its design, construction, and maintenance practices. While no specific combination of green infrastructure BMPs formally defines a green street, best practice is to incorporate at least one green infrastructure BMP identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) into a conventional street design to achieve a measurable level of stormwater management benefits.[i]

Green infrastructure, as defined by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), is any technique to manage stormwater with the primary goal of protecting, rehabilitating, or simulating natural drainage and infiltration patterns.[ii]

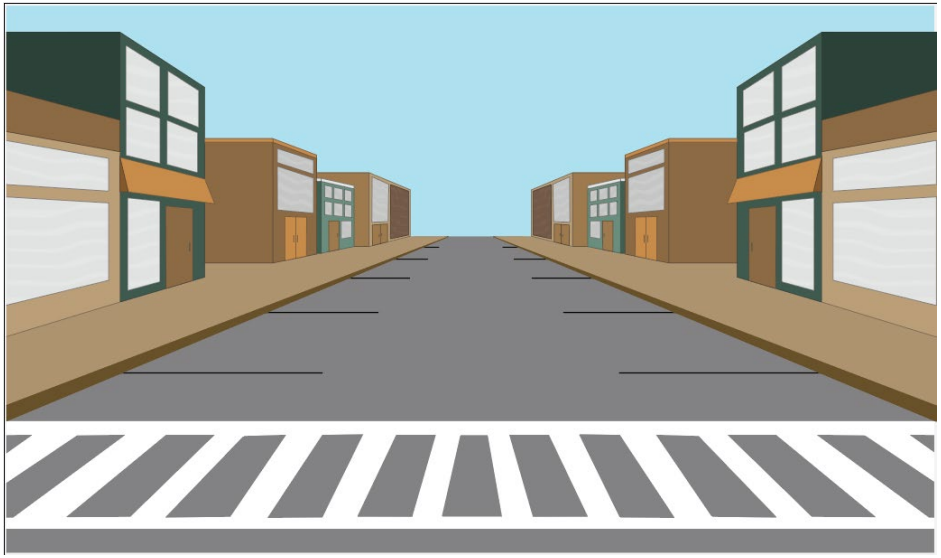
Conventional streets pose problems for both people and the environment. They are typically paved with impervious surfaces such as concrete and asphalt, which contribute to flooding by preventing water from soaking into the ground. These materials also retain heat at a higher rate than naturally occurring materials such as vegetation, contributing to urban heat island effect. Furthermore, conventional streets often lack facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, and physical barriers that separate non-motorized travelers from moving vehicles, compromising the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

The graphics below illustrate how a conventional, or "gray," street can be transformed through the integration of green street elements. The first graphic depicts a typical conventional street design, while the second shows how green infrastructure (GI) and multimodal features can be incorporated to create a safer, more resilient, and more environmentally sustainable street.

Prioritizing green street features in existing and future regional transportation projects enhances community quality of life by creating safe, walkable, and visually appealing spaces that strengthen urban resilience over time.

Figure 1-2: Conventional Gray Street and Green Street

Grey



Green



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

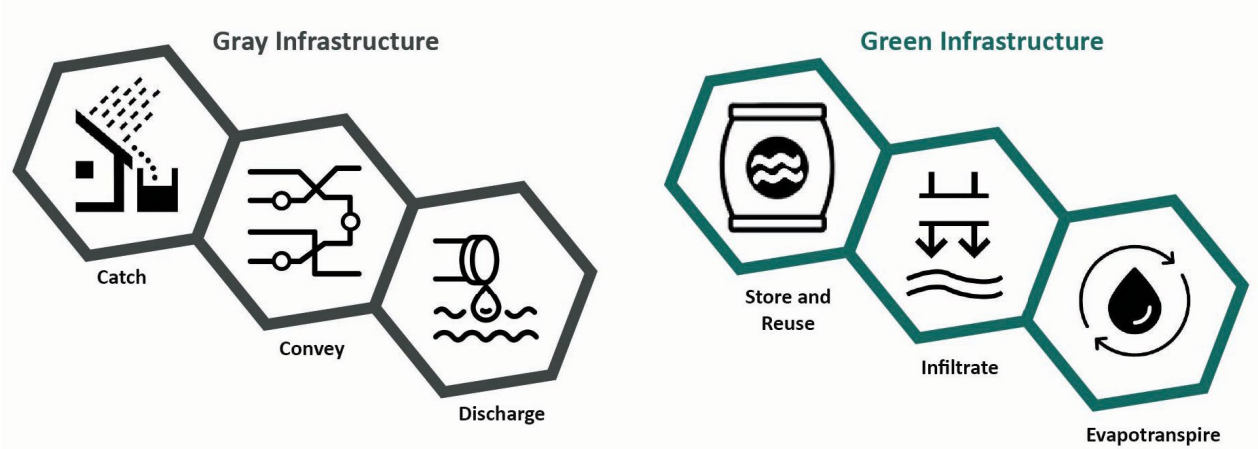
Green Street Values

Green streets address many issues associated with conventional street designs while also providing a range of additional benefits. These benefits span several sectors, including:

1. Stormwater and green infrastructure
2. Transportation mobility and safety,
3. Community health and livability, and
4. Resiliency and economic

This section offers data from both national and international examples that demonstrate why integrating green infrastructure into our regional streetscape design guidelines is a valuable investment.

Figure 1-3: Gray to Green Stormwater Infrastructure



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Stormwater & Green Infrastructure

While local governments throughout the United States continue to rely on gray infrastructure, green infrastructure is emerging as a critical component that uses natural processes to manage stormwater more sustainably.[iii]



Image Source: Clean Water Nashville

Local governments spend approximately $18 to $24 billion annually on stormwater infrastructure, mostly on gray infrastructure. Despite this, a 2020 survey of more than 800 stormwater management systems across the United States found there is an $8.5 billion yearly funding shortfall caused by aging systems and climate change, highlighting the urgent need for investment in GI and reinforcing the important role transportation projects can play in improving stormwater management through green street design.[iv]

Through the process of urban sprawl, natural permeable land cover such as soil and vegetation are rapidly and widely converted into impervious surfaces like asphalt and concrete, resulting in the loss of trees and natural vegetation that would otherwise intercept and slow the flow of water.[vi]

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines stormwater management as the effort to reduce runoff of rainwater or melted snow into streets, lawns, and other sites, and the improvement of water quality.[v]



Urban sprawl can be described as "horizontal growth," or the process in which cities expand outward into surrounding rural or undeveloped land, often due to population growth and the development of low-density suburban areas.[vii]

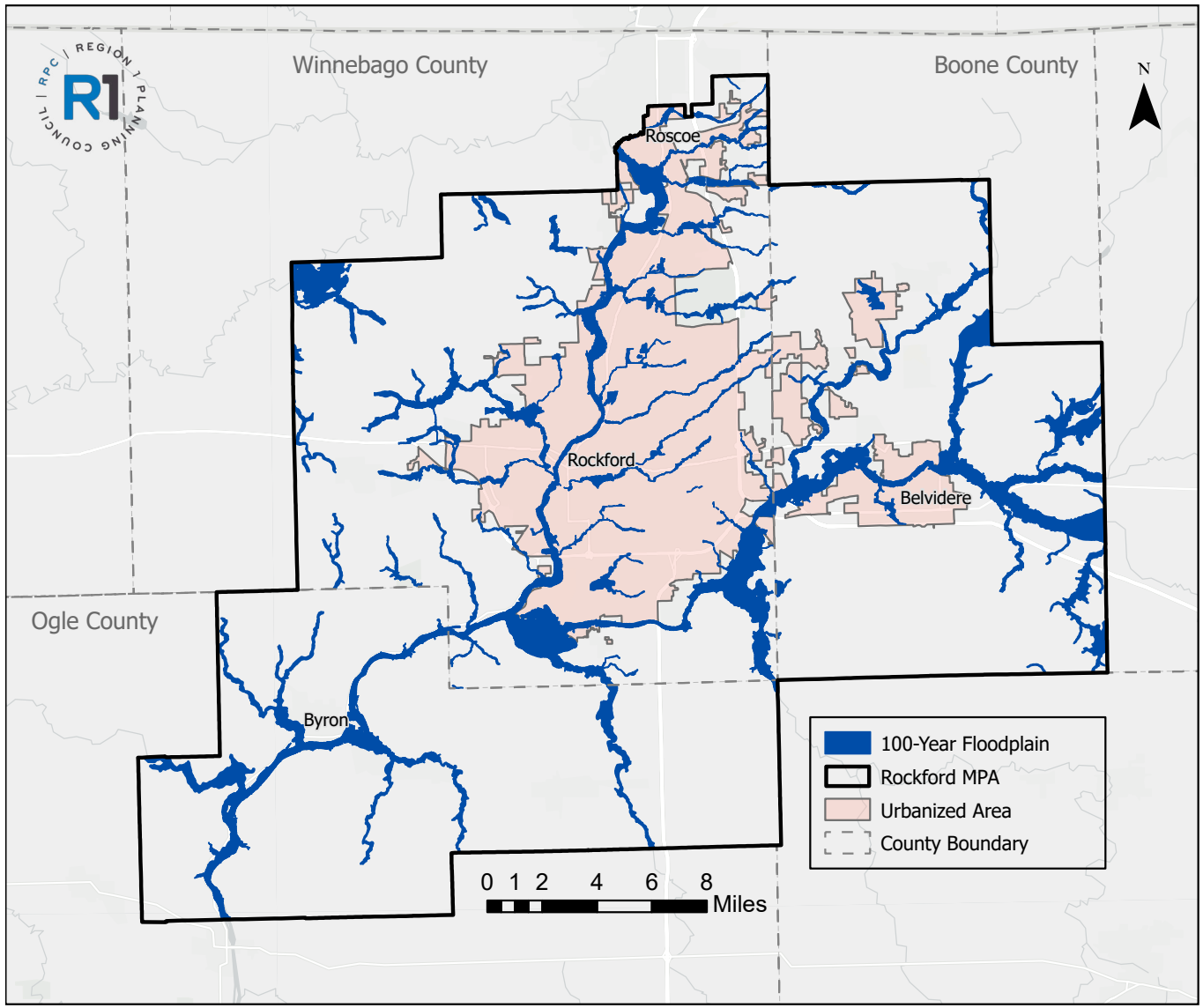
Flood Mitigation

Green infrastructure improves hydrological performance by reducing runoff, which puts less pressure on storm drains and conventional gray infrastructure. Practices such as rain gardens and permeable pavements capture and temporarily store stormwater, helping streets perform more reliably during heavy rain events.[viii]

A 2023 United States Geological Survey (USGS) study in the Central Midwest found that reducing impervious surfaces from 75 to 100 percent to 10 to 20 percent decreased stormwater runoff by 25 percent and increased infiltration by 16 percent.[ix] GI methods like rain gardens and previous pavements also delayed peak flows and reduced total runoff. The study confirms that GI can effectively mimic pre-development hydrology when well-designed and maintained. Long-term monitoring is advised to assess GI performance under changing climate conditions.[x]

By managing stormwater locally, GI reduces localized flooding, improving street safety, accessibility, and infrastructure resilience. Integrating vegetation and permeable surfaces helps communities protect roadways from damage and reduces the burden on aging stormwater systems.[xi] The Rockford MPA has experienced 52 flood events (flood and flash flood) between 2016 and 2025. This number has increased over time; over the prior decade, from 2006 to 2015, the region experienced 36 flooding events.[xii] This trend of increasing frequency and severity of flood events is expected to continue, emphasizing need for local flood management.[xiii]

Figure 1-4: MPA 100-Year Floodplain



Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Water Quality Improvement

Both rainwater and snowmelt collect pollutants such as suspended solids; pesticides and fertilizers from lawns; petrochemicals and other toxic substances leaked from vehicles; and salts used in ice management as the water flows over impervious surfaces and enters stormwater drainage systems.[xiv] These contaminants are often discharged directly into natural surface waters and eventually infiltrate into groundwater systems.

In contrast, GI practices soak up most of the rainwater and snowmelt, filtering it before discharging it into bodies of water.[xv] This process reduces the amount of pollutants entering rivers, streams, and other water bodies, improving water quality and protecting aquatic ecosystems.

A hydrologic study at Recovery Park in Detroit, Michigan, showed GI reduced stormwater runoff by up to 45 percent, with total suspended solids (TSS) reduced by about 30 percent and nitrogen/phosphorus by 15 to 25 percent. This study demonstrates that GI practices enhance infiltration and pollutant removal, supporting their broader adoption in similar urban areas to reduce flooding and improve water quality.[xvi]

Air Quality Improvement

Green streets provide environmental benefits not only for water management but also for air quality. Trees, bushes, and greenery incorporated in GI absorb air pollutants including carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and particulate matter (PM_{10}), trap airborne particulates on their leaves, and reduce surface and air temperatures through shading and evapotranspiration.[xvii] Removal of air pollutants and particulates improves air quality in urban areas and reduces the rate of respiratory, cardiovascular, and pollution-related diseases.[xviii]

According to a 2012 study, vertical greening was found to outperform horizontal vegetation in urban air quality improvement due to better air mixing and pollutant capture. The study highlights the importance of GI placement and geometry in maximizing air quality benefits.[xx]

Evapotranspiration is the process of water moving from the Earth's surface to the atmosphere, encompassing evaporation (the conversion of water from liquid to vapor) and transpiration (the respiration of water from plants).[xix]

Biodiversity Benefits

Vegetated green infrastructure has been found to be conducive for the restoration of wildlife habitat, which attracts beneficial species back to human-populated areas. A 2019 study found that green infrastructure increases species richness by 25 to 30 percent, invertebrate abundance by 20 percent, and plant diversity by 35 percent compared to traditional urban areas. Green roofs support up to 60 percent of the species richness found in ground-level green spaces.[xxi] The wide range of environmental benefits, from flood management to reduction in air and water pollution to increased biodiversity, emphasize the effectiveness of green streets as a stormwater management solution.



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council



Image Source: National Audubon Society

Transportation Mobility & Safety

Green street elements promote both active transportation and safer streetscapes. Integrating greenery such as street trees, native vegetation cover, and green infrastructure BMPs into urban design not only enhances the visual appeal of city streets but also plays a significant role in influencing how people move through and interact with their environment.

Mobility Patterns

Green streets encourage active lifestyles by making routes more appealing, comfortable, and engaging.[xxii] In dense urban settings, greenery can shift mobility patterns by prompting individuals to choose routes that are long and green. These routes are more appealing over shorter routes that lack aesthetic or environmental value. A similar trend is evident in recreational cycling, where the quality of the streetscape heavily influences route choices. Commuter cycling also benefits from the presence of connected and efficient networks. One study found that in walkable cities such as Barcelona, Spain, proximity to large green spaces and tree-lined streets is strongly linked with increased walking time, reinforcing the idea that GI supports healthier, more active lifestyles.[xxiii]

The following are the most commonly implemented types of existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Rockford MPA.

Figure 1-5: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities



Type: Pedestrian
Facility: Sidewalk
Description: Paved path for pedestrians along streets



Type: Pedestrian
Facility: Crosswalk
Description: Designated street crossing zone.



Type: Pedestrian
Facility: Curb Ramp
Description: Sloped transition from sidewalk to street.



Type: Pedestrian/Bicycle
Facility: Shared-Use Path
Description: Path for both pedestrians and cyclists near roadway network



Type: Pedestrian/Bicycle
Facility: Trail
Description: Natural or paved off-road paths



Type: Bicycle
Facility: Bicycles Lanes
Description: Marked lanes on the roadway reserved for cyclists.



Type: Bicycle
Facility: Sharrows
Description: Shared lane markings indicating cyclist positioning.

Street Safety

In addition to promoting mobility, green streets contribute to improved safety for all users. Street trees and landscaping serve as natural traffic-calming elements by creating visual enclosure and providing buffers between travel lanes and pedestrian areas. These features introduce psychological cues that encourage drivers to reduce speeds, which can help reduce risky behavior and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in lower-speed urban environments.[xxiv]

Physical traffic-calming measures are typically organized into four categories: vertical deflection, horizontal deflection, roadway narrowing, and routing restrictions.[xxv] Within the Rockford MPA, the most commonly observed physical traffic-calming measures are horizontal deflection and roadway narrowing treatments, including roundabouts and raised medians. Vertical deflection measures such as speed tables or raised crosswalks are commonly used in other jurisdictions but are limited within the Rockford Region due to municipal regulations.

Horizontal Deflections can be described as design elements that shift vehicle paths to reduce speeds, such as roundabouts, chicanes, and traffic circles.

Vertical Deflections refer to raised roadway features, including speed tables and raised crosswalks, that slow vehicles by introducing a change in roadway elevation. [xxvi]

The following are examples of commonly implemented types of physical traffic-calming measures within the Rockford MPA.

Figure 1-6: Physical traffic-calming measures

West State Street Raised Median



Auburn Street Roundabout



In addition, tree cover enhances perceived safety; residents consistently feel safer in neighborhoods with more greenery, even when accounting for socioeconomic and urban form factors.[xxvii] These benefits are especially valuable in communities that experience higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, where enhancing public spaces can contribute to broader goals of equity, well-being, and livability.

Some studies have raised safety concerns, suggesting that street trees may reduce visibility or increase crash severity. However, counterarguments highlight the potential traffic-calming effects discussed above.[xxviii] By supporting active modes of transportation while fostering safer, more inclusive streetscapes, green streets offer a comprehensive approach to sustainable urban design.

Community Health & Livability

Green streets provide significant benefits to public health and neighborhood livability. Street trees and other vegetation improve air quality, reduce heat, and promote outdoor activity. These contribute to lower rates of respiratory illness, heat-related stress, and mental health challenges.

Well-designed green infrastructure also elevates the aesthetics and sociability of streetscapes, encouraging community interaction, recreation, and even reductions in crime. Together, these benefits make green streets a valuable investment for safer, healthier, and more vibrant urban environments.

Public Health

Street trees and other urban green spaces provide numerous health benefits. Trees filter and absorb pollutants from the air, contributing to better air quality and decreased respiratory problems.[xxix] An average green street facility in Portland, Oregon, is estimated to remove 20.2 grams of particulate matter (PM_{10}) annually.[xxx] Trees also reduce sound transmission and noise pollution.[xxxi] A more pleasant aesthetic and physical environment encourages people to go outdoors, which could improve physical fitness through increased outdoor activity.[xxxii] Trees and green space are also correlated with decreased stress, anxiety, and depression.[xxxiii]

Other green street infrastructure also contributes to positive health outcomes. Permeable pavements can reduce pollution from road salt because, due to the delay in formation of a frost layer, less salt application is needed.[xxxiv] Improved drainage decreases standing water, which in turn decreases accumulation of pollutants and bacteria, as well as transmission of vector-borne diseases.[xxxv]

Vector-borne diseases are illnesses such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease that are transmitted through organisms such as mosquitoes and ticks ("vectors"). Standing water provides habitat for mosquitos to reproduce.[xxxvi]

Cooling

Trees and other vegetation provide cooler ambient temperatures on streets and sidewalks by increasing shade, limiting the amount of solar radiation absorbed by artificial surfaces, and cooling the air through evapotranspiration.[xxxvii] This creates a more pleasant experience for pedestrians and decreases instances of heat-related illness like heat stress and heat stroke.[xxxviii] One study in Oslo, Norway, found that areas with no tree canopy had an average high surface temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius (°C), or 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), where areas with 100 percent tree canopy had an average high surface temperature of 29°C (84°F).[xxxix]



Image Source: Planetizen

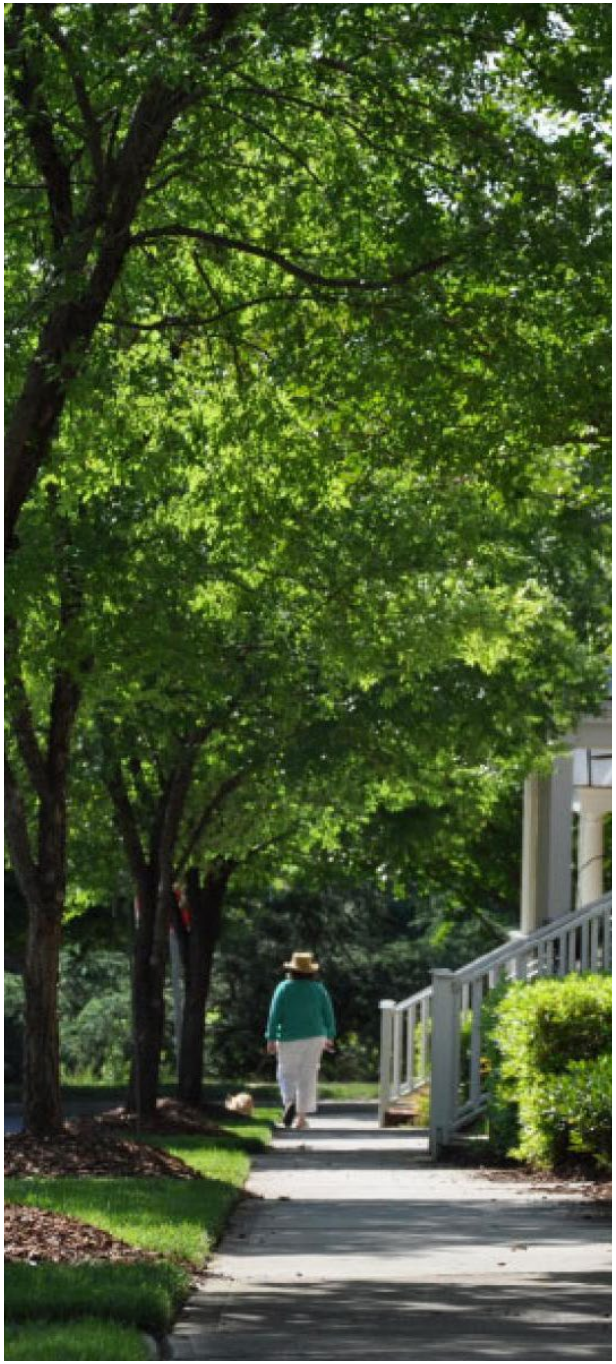


Image Source: CNU Journal



Image Source: Bloomberg Philanthropies

Higher outdoor air temperatures are associated with higher mortality rates, especially in elderly residents.[xl] Cooling is also critical for children, who are exposed to higher air temperatures than adults by being closer to heat-absorbing pavement. A study in College Station, Texas, found mean air temperatures above the sidewalk on summer afternoons at child height to be 1.33°C (2.4°F) higher than at adult height. The presence of street trees, grass, and other vegetation has beneficial cooling effect at both child and adult heights.[xli]

The Rockford MPA has been experiencing an increase in the amount of extreme heat days (days where the temperature reaches above 95°F), emphasizing the importance of cooling measures. From 2018 to 2024, every year had at least one extreme heat day; from 2005 to 2017, only five years had at least one extreme heat day.[xlii]

Aesthetics & Livability

When properly maintained, GI can improve the aesthetics and quality of life for a neighborhood. Visual preference surveys indicate that residents prefer tree-lined streets to streets without trees, especially when combined with other placemaking features like art installations, benches, or aesthetically pleasing signage.[xliii] [xliv]

The presence of street trees and other GI can increase perception of neighborhood quality; positive perception of GI and its benefits increases when residents are aware of its presence and purpose.[xlv] More appealing and pleasant outdoor spaces can encourage residents to go outside, offering a new space for recreation and for building social relationships between community residents, businesses, and organizations.[xlvi]

The implementation of green space has also been associated with a reduction in crime, including gun assault and other violent crime, thefts and burglaries, vandalism, and narcotics possession.[xlvii] [xlviii] [xlix] In Portland, Oregon, one study found that for every increase in 100 trees, violent crime was reduced by about 24 crimes the following year.[l] The social and health benefits of green streets help communities to be safe and pleasant places to live and travel.

Resiliency & Economic Impacts

Green streets provide measurable economic and resilience benefits for communities. These practices help reduce infrastructure costs, protect property, and extend the lifespan of buildings and pavements. Green streets contribute to increased property values, energy savings, and local economic activity through job creation. Altogether, integrating green infrastructure into streetscapes supports climate-resilient, economically sustainable, and more livable environments.

Water

Green stormwater infrastructure can lower costs through reducing water treatment needs. Trees and other plants naturally filter water through their roots, reducing water contamination (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus) before the water reaches treatment facilities.[li]

Green stormwater infrastructure also reduces the severity of flooding, which can provide economic savings from reduced damage and less required cleanup.[lii] A 2018 study of Corvallis, Oregon, found that the benefits from permeable pavement and green roofs could potentially save the city $540 to

$552 million in damages during a 100-year flood event (a flood with a high severity that has a 1 percent chance of occurring every year). This exceeds the cost to implement the green infrastructure required.[liii] Furthermore, GI can reduce stress on downstream gray infrastructure, extending its lifespan and reducing overall system costs.[liv]

Tree Shade & Pavement

Increased tree shade is positively correlated with better pavement condition. One study in California found the presence of shade trees could save up to 58 percent on repaving costs compared to unshaded streets over a 30-year period, depending on the type of tree. Larger trees are especially valuable because they produce more shade per tree, requiring fewer trees overall and reducing planting costs by 50 percent.[lv]

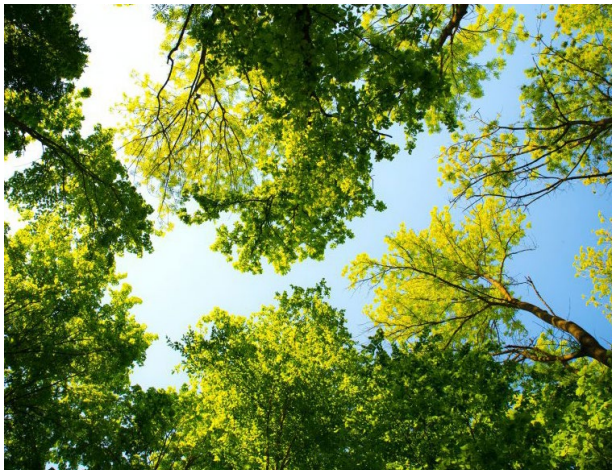


Image Source: Bloomberg Philanthropies

Buildings

Commercial buildings with higher urban greenery sell and rent for higher prices than those without.[lvi] Residential housing prices are similarly affected by the proportion of tree canopy[lvii] and the amount of green that can be seen from the residence.[lviii] Homebuyers prefer to live in areas with a higher amount of green space,[lix] and proper management of green space is just as valuable as tree abundance for increased housing values.[lx] A study of Portland, Oregon, found a 3.5 to 5 percent increase in home values on green streets with bioswales.[lxi]

Additionally, shade from street trees could decrease energy requirements for buildings on those streets. The Portland study found an average annual energy saving of 155 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per green street facility.[lxii] At the 2025 average electricity rate for Portland of 19 cents per kWh,[lxiii] that equals a savings of $29.45 per year per facility.

Economic Impact

Green infrastructure can provide a positive overall economic impact on a region. A 2023 study in Washington, DC, estimated the value of GI in tax revenue, wages, job creation, and economic input. They found that after the implementation of GI requirements, GI construction created annually on average $91 million in economic output, $45 million in labor income, and $60 million in value added to the region, along with 437 jobs.[lxiv] A similar study in Cleveland, Ohio, found in 2013 that maintenance of planned GI would create a total of $23.9 million in economic output, $11 million in labor income, $13.8 million in value added to the region, and $2.8 million in tax generation, along with 219 jobs, over five years.[lxv] Additionally, a higher presence of vegetation and green space is correlated with higher median income, education, and employment.[lxvi] These findings highlight the economic benefits that green streets provide alongside their primary environmental benefits.



Image Source: North Carolina State

Using the Green Streets Guide

Purpose of this Guide

The Green Streets Guide provides recommendations to promote sustainable and environmentally friendly streetscape development across the Rockford Region in Northern Illinois. Developed in 2025-2026 as part of a broader effort to create a regionwide Green Streets Plan, this guide represents the first step toward implementing green street projects throughout the MPA.

The guide's purpose is to support municipalities, designers, and planners in incorporating green infrastructure into street planning, construction, and maintenance. By focusing on strategies that reduce flooding, improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, and enhance neighborhood aesthetics, the guide provides practical direction for improving streets in a comprehensive and adaptable manner. It is intended for continuous use throughout all phases of future projects, from early planning to construction to long-term maintenance, ensuring consistency and effectiveness across the region.



A planner, sometimes called a city, urban, or regional planner, is a professional who helps communities decide how land, streets, buildings, and public spaces should be used now and in the future. Planners work with local governments, engineers, elected officials, and the public to guide growth, improve transportation and safety, reduce environmental risks like flooding, and enhance quality of life.[lxvii]

Intended Guide Users

This guide is designed to support a broad range of stakeholders involved in the planning, design, implementation, maintenance, and use of streets within the Rockford MPA.

Planning Professional

Municipal and regional planners can use this guide to inform long-range plans, corridor studies, capital improvement programs, and policy development related to green streets and complete streets.

Elected Officials and Decision Makers

Local leaders can use this guide to understand green street concepts, evaluate project proposals, and support informed decision-making related to infrastructure investments.

Engineers and Designer

Transportation, civil, and landscape professionals can use this guide as a reference for integrating green infrastructure, multimodal design elements, and context-sensitive solutions into street projects.

Community Members and Stakeholders

Residents, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders can use this guide to better understand green streets, engage in planning processes, and support projects that enhance safety, resilience, and neighborhood character.

Navigating the Guide

Chapter 1. Building Greener Streets

This chapter introduces green streets, the problems they address, and the benefits they provide. It also provides tips for how to use this guide.

Chapter 2. Existing Street Landscape

This chapter presents the existing design infrastructure in the Rockford Region for local streets, minor and major collectors, and minor and principal arterials in residential, suburban, and urban contexts.

Chapter 3. Elements of a Green Street

This chapter presents green street components and design practices, including green infrastructure (e.g., bioswales, permeable pavement, street trees), transportation infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, chicanes), and materials (e.g., types of plants, energy efficient lighting).

Chapter 4. Case Studies

This chapter highlights case studies from other cities across the Northern Illinois region that have implemented green streets.

Chapter 5. Green Streets Vision

This chapter offers recommendations and strategies for implementing green streets in the Rockford Region. This incorporates community input and visual representations.

Chapter 6. From Guide to Action

This chapter outlines relevant local, state, and federal policies impacting green street implementation, as well as best practices for green street design. This chapter also discusses other implementation considerations such as potential collaborations, funding opportunities, and maintenance.

Chapter 6: From Guide to Action

Green streets are an investment in regional resilience, mobility, livability, and economic vitality. Implementation takes the green street elements and best practices identified in this guide and translates them into operational green streets for the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). However, moving from concept to implementation requires addressing logistical considerations such as technical standards, state and local policy, funding sources, long-term maintenance plans, and cross-agency collaboration.

This chapter highlights existing resources, guidelines, and partnerships that agencies can leverage to implement green streets. It also identifies policy gaps that, if addressed, can facilitate future implementation efforts and help the Rockford Region to see the tangible benefits of green streets.

Design & Technical Guidance

Each green street design is shaped by its specific roadway characteristics, making uniform design standards difficult to apply across varied contexts. As a result, practitioners often integrate multiple technical guidance resources from local, state, and federal sources in order to best design context-sensitive green streets. This section summarizes regionally relevant documents, their design recommendations, and their application to green streets in the region. A consolidated reference table (Table 6-1: Design Standards and Guideline Documents) is provided later on in this section.

Local Design Guidance

Region 1 Planning Council's (R1) Complete Streets Design Guidelines (2024) is the primary local technical standard for streets within the MPA. It provides design parameters for eight street typologies and directly addresses green street elements. The guidelines also provide specifications compliant with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) for all bike lane types, from standard lanes to protected and contra-flow facilities. Because these guidelines are directly tailored to the region, they should act as a primary reference during the design of a green street within the Rockford MPA.[i]

The Complete Streets Policy for the Rockford Region (2024) provides the governance and funding framework within which those design decisions are made. Its Environment and Health guiding principle explicitly commits the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to managing stormwater through green infrastructure implementation. The policy also directs that federal funds, including Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), and Carbon Reduction Program allocations, be scored and prioritized using Complete Streets criteria, creating a direct financial mechanism for advancing green street projects. This policy applies to all project phases and fulfills the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requirement for MPOs to adopt a regional Complete Streets design standard.[ii]

State Design Guidance

The Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Overview of Design Guidance in Illinois (2024) synthesizes how federal, state, and local standards shape active transportation infrastructure statewide. Its central theme is context sensitivity: design must reflect local land use, users, and travel conditions rather than uniform and authoritative standards. The document identifies the AASHTO 2012 Bike Guide and FHWA Bicycle Facility Selection Guide as Illinois's current design baseline,

and notes that FHWA's November 2023 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) guidance now requires use of recognized non-motorized design standards on National Highway System (NHS) routes. Design exceptions remain available through coordination with IDOT personnel when standard templates do not fit local conditions.[iii]

The Livability chapter of IDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan frames pedestrian, bicycle, and transit investments as both safety amenities and congestion remediation.[iv] The transportation demand management (TDM) framework offers a practical argument for green street investments that extends beyond environmental benefits, and provides a technical explanation of how pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure can reduce vehicle demand and improve system efficiency. For green street planning in the Rockford MPA, this framing is practically useful when building project justifications for capital improvement programs and grant applications. Describing green street elements in terms of reduced vehicle miles traveled, improved multimodal level of service, and enhanced access to employment makes projects more competitive for state and federal programs that evaluate investments against those same performance criteria.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) Green Infrastructure Best Management Practices report catalogs 13 best management practice (BMP) types, including rain gardens, bioswales, bioretention, permeable pavement, and infiltration trenches.[v] Because the IEPA uses this report as the technical basis for its Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) program, aligning project designs with its BMP definitions is a prerequisite for state grant eligibility.

National Design Guidance

Two U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publications anchor federal green street design guidance. Green Streets: A Conceptual Guide to Effective Green Streets Design Solutions defines BMPs for green streets across four street contexts: residential, commercial, arterial, and alley.[vi] It establishes green streets as a scalable and adaptable practice. The Green Streets Handbook (2021) builds on this with detailed design specifications for eight green infrastructure (GI) practice types and a six-step programmatic process that spans from objective-setting to community engagement and design.[vii] Its practice selection matrix, which matches GI types to street classifications, is the most directly applicable federal tool for green street project delivery.

The National Association of City Transportation Officials' (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide and Urban Street Stormwater Guide are the practitioner standards most directly applicable to streetscape design in the MPA. The Design Guide's three-zone sidewalk framework (frontage, pedestrian, and amenity zones) structures where GI can be placed within the right-of-way (ROW), while the Stormwater Guide provides specifications for bioswales, planters, and permeable pavement in constrained ROWs.[viii] [ix] Because NACTO is recognized by FHWA as a supplemental design authority, its standards can be applied on federal-aid projects without special exceptions, offering a significant practical advantage.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Building Great Transportation Infrastructure (2023) links active transportation investment to four national objectives: national security, environmental sustainability, economic expansion, and equity. This provides the policy rationale for embedding green street criteria into MPO capital programming and competitive grant applications.[x]



Image Source: Region 1 Planning Council

Design Standards Reference Summary

Table 6-1 summarizes all standards and guidelines described in this section, organized by level of government, for use as a quick reference during project planning and design.

Table 6-1: Design Standards and Guideline Documents

Level	Document	Issuing Body	Relevance to Green Streets	Key Design Takeaways
Local	Complete Street Design Guidelines (2024)[xi]	Region 1 Planning Council	Primary local design standard for the Rockford MPA; addresses tree infrastructure, stormwater, bike facilities, and modal hierarchy	• Specifies three tree installation types: open soil trench, covered soil trench, and tree pits. • Provides guidelines for integrating vegetated stormwater management (VSM) systems, such as swales, rain gardens, planters, into the sidewalk amenity zone. • Provides AASHTO/MUTCD-based widths for all bike lane types (standard, buffered, protected, contra-flow). • Context-sensitive modal hierarchy tailored to 8 street typologies. • Identifies intersections and medians as VSM placement opportunities
Local	Complete Streets Policy for the Rockford Region (2024)[xii]	Region 1 Planning Council	Governance and funding framework; establishes green infrastructure as an explicit policy mandate	• Environment & Health principle explicitly requires GI for stormwater management. • Project scoring criteria prioritizes active transportation and underserved communities for TAP, STBG, and Carbon Reduction funds. • Applies to all project phases across all street types in the MPA. • Fulfills IIJA requirement for MPOs to adopt a regional Complete Streets design standard.
State	Overview of Design Guidance in Illinois (2024)[xiii]	Illinois DOT	Synthesizes how federal, state, and local standards shape active transportation design; establishes context sensitivity as the governing design principle	• AASHTO 2012 Bike Guide and FHWA Bicycle Facility Selection Guide are the current Illinois baseline. • FHWA Nov. 2023 BIL guidance requires recognized nonmotorized design standards on NHS routes. • Design exceptions are attainable through coordination with IDOT personnel. • Encourages proactive network planning beyond minimum code compliance.
State	Livability (IDOT Long Range Transportation Plan)[xiv]	Illinois DOT	Provides state-level justification for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit investments as congestion management tools	• Reframes active transportation infrastructure as a functional congestion and access solution. • Quality, location, and type of facilities determine access to jobs, schools, and services. • Supports multimodal corridor investments aligned with green street design objectives.

Level	Document	Issuing Body	Relevance to Green Streets	Key Design Takeaways
State	Green Infrastructure Best Management Practices[xv]	Illinois EPA	Comprehensive state BMP catalog; basis for IEPA GIGO grant eligibility and nonpoint source compliance	• Documents 13 BMP types, including rain gardens, bioswales, bioretention, permeable pavement, green roofs, and infiltration trenches. • Maps directly to green infrastructure elements in Chapter 3 of this guide. • Aligning designs with IEPA BMP definitions is required for GIGO funding eligibility.
Federal	Green Streets: A Conceptual Guide to Effective Green Streets Design Solutions[xvi]	U.S. EPA	Foundational federal definition of the green street concept; identifies BMPs by street context	• Applies GI to four contexts: residential, commercial, arterial streets, and alleys. • Core BMPs: rain gardens, vegetated swales, stormwater planters, curb extensions, permeable paving. • Establishes green streets as a scalable, context-adaptable framework.
Federal	Green Streets Handbook (2021)[xvii]	U.S. EPA	Most technically detailed federal green streets resource; provides a full program development process and practice-level design specifications	• Covers eight GI practice types with design specifications: bioretention, bioswales, curb extensions, planters, tree systems, infiltration trenches, subsurface detention, permeable pavement. • Practice selection matrix matches GI types to street classifications (arterial, collector, local, alley). • Six-step programmatic process supports corridor study and site assessment work.
Federal / National	Urban Street Design Guide & Urban Street Stormwater Guide[xviii]	NACTO	Practitioner design guide directly cited in R1 Design Guidelines; recognized by FHWA as a supplemental nonmotorized design authority	• Three-zone sidewalk framework (frontage, pedestrian, amenity) structures GI placement within the ROW. • Provides bioswale, planter, and green alley specifications; Stormwater Guide addresses GI in constrained ROW. • Bike facility standards adopted by R1; applicable on federal-aid projects without design exceptions.
Federal	Building Great Transportation Infrastructure, Ed. 2 (2023)[xix]	U.S. DOT	National planning framework linking active transportation and sustainability to core infrastructure objectives	• Four national objectives: national security, environmental sustainability, economic expansion, and equity. • Supports incorporating sustainability and equity criteria into MPO project selection and capital programming. • Provides national policy alignment for green street funding proposals and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) integration.

Existing Policy Frameworks & Projects

Green street implementation in the Rockford Region is supported by an integrated, multi-scalar policy and project framework spanning local, state, and federal levels. Collectively, these policies establish regulatory authority, funding mechanisms, and design guidance that enable the systematic incorporation of multimodal transportation, stormwater management, and environmental performance within transportation corridors.

Local Policies, Plans, & Projects

Policies & Plans

At the local level, the Complete Streets Policy for the Rockford Region establishes a regulatory foundation for integrating multimodal transportation into roadway design. The policy institutionalizes consideration of all users within routine planning and reconstruction processes, supporting corridor-level implementation of green street elements such as bicycle facilities, pedestrian infrastructure, and streetscape enhancements. This framework enables transportation projects to function as platforms for co-located environmental infrastructure.[xx]

The City of Rockford Stormwater Master Plan reinforces green streets by prioritizing drainage system improvements, flood mitigation, and compliance with local, state, and federal stormwater regulations. The plan advances a watershed-based approach to infrastructure planning, establishing a direct linkage between transportation investments and watershed-scale stormwater management strategies. This alignment supports distributed green infrastructure practices that reduce runoff volumes and improve system resilience.[xxi]

Projects & Studies

Local implementation is already underway through several planning initiatives. R1's Keith Creek Flood Mitigation Project demonstrates integration of green infrastructure with flood control and neighborhood revitalization, including the use of distributed stormwater management strategies such as permeable surfaces and storage systems.[xxii]

Additionally, the City of Rockford's Auburn Street Corridor Study advances a multimodal corridor redesign that includes street trees, landscape treatments, and multi-use paths. These elements contribute to stormwater interception, urban heat island mitigation, and improved user safety, illustrating the multifunctional performance of green street design.[xxiii] Plans such as R1's Parking Reimagined further advance the conversion of underutilized impervious surfaces into functional green infrastructure assets, reducing runoff while improving land use efficiency and urban environmental quality.[xxiv]

State Policies, Legislation, & Projects

Policies & Legislation

At the state level, enabling legislation and agency programs provide both regulatory authority and funding mechanisms. The Illinois General Assembly's Illinois Environmental Protection Act (415 ILCS 5) establishes statewide requirements for pollution control, permitting, and environmental protection, forming the legal basis for integrating green infrastructure into public projects. The Act supports alignment between environmental compliance and transportation investment, enabling incorporation of stormwater management practices within capital improvement programs.[xxv]

Additionally, the IEPA's Illinois Green Infrastructure for Clean Water Act mandates statewide planning and investment in environmental grant programs. The Act requires evaluation of stormwater systems and prioritization of green infrastructure-based solutions, reinforcing a shift toward sustainable, performance-based water management practices.[xxvi]

Projects

Projects across the state further demonstrate implementation of green street principles. Cook County partners with the Illinois Tollway and villages of Bensenville and Franklin on the Green and Franklin Avenue Improvement Project. This project serves as a regional precedent within Illinois, integrating multimodal transportation improvements with stormwater management infrastructure. Improvements include enhanced roadway safety features and detention-based stormwater controls that reduce localized flooding and improve system performance.[xxvii]

The City of Springfield's Green Infrastructure Bio-Swale, Stormwater Capture and Reuse Project upgraded its sewer garage with a bioswale and an underground storage system to capture stormwater. The system captures approximately 124,000 gallons of runoff for reuse in municipal operations, reducing salt runoff and demonstrating a closed-loop water management approach. This project highlights the potential for municipal facilities to serve as pilot sites for scalable green infrastructure practices.[xxviii]

Chapter 4. Case Studies highlights more green street projects across northern Illinois.

Federal Policies & Legislation

Federal policy frameworks reinforce green streets through funding incentives, regulatory requirements, and national performance priorities. Agencies such as U.S. DOT and EPA provide funding, technical guidance, and regulatory oversight that support integration of transportation and environmental objectives. Additional federal frameworks, including Clean Water Act compliance requirements and transportation funding programs, further incentivize incorporation of green infrastructure into roadway projects, supporting consistent implementation across jurisdictions.

Implementation Strategies

Effective green street implementation requires coordinated action across agencies, alignment of funding sources, and long-term operational planning. The following strategies translate policy and project frameworks into consistent, scalable implementation outcomes.

Responsible Agencies

Green street implementation requires interdisciplinary collaboration. Federal agencies such as U.S.DOT and EPA provide funding, regulatory guidance, and technical resources. At the state level, departments of transportation and environmental protection agencies coordinate planning, compliance, and funding distribution. Local governments, including public works, engineering, planning, and urban forestry departments, serve as the primary entities responsible for project delivery, design, and maintenance.

Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities improves coordination, reduces project delivery conflicts, and ensures long-term system performance. Successful implementation requires early and continuous coordination between government, utilities, transit agencies, developers, and community organizations to align infrastructure investments and minimize conflicts.

Table 6-2: Responsible Agencies

Federal Agency	Planning & Design	Implementation	Operations & Maintenance	Funding
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Provides technical guidance and best practice standards for green infrastructure design.[xxix] [xxx]	-	-	Administers competitive grant programs including Clean Water State Revolving Fund.[xxxi]
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Issues design standards and technical resources applicable to federally funded street projects.[xxxii] [xxxiii]	Oversees compliance on federal-aid projects.[xxxiv]	-	Administers Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds through IDOT.[xxxv] [xxxvi]
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Provides guidance for transit-supportive green street design.[xxxvii]	-	-	Funds transit-corridor improvements eligible for green street integration.[xxxviii]

State Agency	Planning & Design	Implementation	Operations & Maintenance	Funding
Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)	Establishes statewide design standards; reviews projects on state-classified routes.[xxxix]	Oversees construction on state routes; issues encroachment permits for work within state ROW.[xl] [xli]	Maintains state-classified roadways and associated infrastructure.[xlii]	Administers federal transportation funds through STBG and TAP; issues state grants for transportation and safety improvements.[xliii] [xliv] [xlv]
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)	Provides green infrastructure BMP guidance; issues National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permits for construction-phase activity.[xlvi] [xlvii]	Issues construction-phase stormwater permits.[xlviii]	-	Administers the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program and Water Pollution Control Loan Program.[xlix] [l]
Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)	Provides native plant species guidance and ecological siting recommendations.[li]	-	-	Administers conservation and habitat restoration grant programs applicable to vegetated GI installations.[lii]

Regional Agency	Planning & Design	Implementation	Operations & Maintenance	Funding
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Region 1 Planning Council)	Coordinates regional green street planning; develops corridor studies and design guidance; integrates green streets into long-range transportation planning.	Coordinates multi-agency project delivery; provides technical assistance to member municipalities.	-	Programs federal transportation funds through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); identifies and coordinates grant opportunities for member municipalities.

Local Agency	Planning & Design	Implementation	Operations & Maintenance	Funding
Municipal Public Works Departments	Conduct site assessments; develop construction documents; coordinate utility conflicts and ROW constraints.[liii]	Primary implementing entity for locally owned streets; manages contractor procurement and construction oversight.[liv]	Responsible for routine inspection, vegetation management, inlet maintenance, sediment removal, and snow operations on locally owned infrastructure.[lv]	Apply for and administer grant funds; allocate capital improvement program (CIP) budgets.[lvi]
County Highway Departments	Conduct site assessments for county-classified roads; coordinate with IDOT on design standards.[lvii]	Implement green street projects on county-classified roadways.[lviii]	Maintain county-classified roadways and associated green infrastructure.[lix]	Administer county transportation funds; may partner with municipalities on shared corridors.[lx]

Local Agency	Planning & Design	Implementation	Operations & Maintenance	Funding
Local Stormwater / Utility Districts	Provide drainage system mapping and capacity data during design.[lxi]	Coordinate utility relocations; inspect stormwater connections.[lxii]	Maintain regional stormwater systems; may assume O&M agreements for larger GI installations.[lxiii]	May contribute stormwater utility fee revenue to green infrastructure projects.[lxiv]

Funding Opportunities

Embedding green streets into existing capital improvement programs (CIPs) ensures that green infrastructure is implemented systematically rather than as standalone projects. Aligning municipal CIPs with regional transportation goals and state funding priorities allows green street elements such as permeable pavement and bioswales to be incorporated into routine roadway reconstruction and maintenance cycles. This approach reduces incremental costs, streamlines implementation, and ensures consistent integration across the transportation network. Establishing this connection also strengthens competitiveness for external funding by demonstrating alignment with federal, state, and regional transportation and environmental objectives. Green street projects may be eligible for transportation, environmental, or community development funding from local, state, federal, or private sources.

Federal Programs

- U.S.DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grants – Supports multimodal transportation projects incorporating sustainability and resilience elements.[lxv]
- EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) – Finances stormwater and water quality projects, including green infrastructure retrofits.[lxvi]
- Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program – Provides grants for projects that reduce runoff and improve water quality through green infrastructure practices.[lxvii] [lxviii]

State Programs

- IEPA Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) – Supports stormwater management projects using green infrastructure practices.[lxix]
- IDOT Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) – Funds community-based transportation improvements, including streetscape and environmental enhancements.[lxx]
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) – Provides funding for land acquisition and park development, including green space elements that can complement green street corridors.[lxxi]

Regional Programs

- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), managed by Region 1 Planning Council – Provides flexible federal funding allocated at the regional level for roadway reconstruction and multimodal improvements, creating opportunities to integrate green street elements.[lxxii]

Municipalities can also fund green streets through local revenue sources, such as taxes or fees, or access private investment through public-private partnerships. Coordinating these funding sources allows jurisdictions to bundle transportation, stormwater, and climate adaptation objectives into unified investment strategies. This integrated approach improves funding competitiveness, maximizes return on investment, and accelerates implementation of green streets across the transportation network.

Operations and Maintenance

Long-term performance of green street projects depends on clearly defined maintenance responsibilities. Without sustained maintenance, green infrastructure systems may lose hydraulic and ecological functionality, resulting in reduced stormwater performance. Considering future maintenance requirements, including costs, funding sources, responsible parties, and maintenance frequency from the planning stages of a green street project is important to ensure a project will continue to operate effectively.

Additionally, support for green streets is tied to their visual appeal and perceived long-term viability. Maintenance concerns featured prominently in surveys of residents living near green streets, including frequency of maintenance, party responsible for maintenance, and negative aesthetics of a facility if not properly maintained.[lxxiii] [lxxiv] In R1's green streets survey, 45 percent of respondents indicated that they were concerned about maintenance and upkeep costs; this was the most popular concern by a significant margin. During public engagement, municipal agencies also raised maintenance as a primary concern.

Municipal agencies operate and maintain public green infrastructure, while private property owners may be responsible for features on private land.[lxxv] Routine maintenance activities, including vegetation management, debris removal, and system inspection, can be supplemented through partnerships with community organizations and other local stakeholders. Some green street elements, such as permeable pavement, have unique maintenance concerns and require training for maintenance staff to ensure they are managed properly. Tables 6-3 and 6-4 outline common maintenance activities for vegetated BMPs (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, street trees) and for permeable pavement.[lxxvi] [lxxvii]

Table 6-3: Common Maintenance Activities for Vegetated BMPs

Activity	Purpose	Frequency
Inspect facility	Determine what maintenance activities should be performed. Identify any issues. Assess BMP functionality.	Regular.
Remove trash, sediment, other debris	Prevent clogging that reduces the amount of stormwater infiltrating the BMP. Maintain aesthetic.	Regular.
Prune vegetation	Encourage healthy plant growth. Prevents safety hazards caused by blocked paths or sightlines. Maintain aesthetic.	Regular.
Remove weeds	Ensure unwanted plants do not compete with native plants. Maintain aesthetic.	Regular.
Water	Encourage healthy plant growth.	Regular, based on rainfall. More frequent watering may be required during the first 3-5 years of a facility while plants are establishing.
Manage pests	Maintain public health and health of vegetation.	Regular (less frequent).
Apply mulch	Minimize weed growth. Prevent erosion. Promote soil moisture. Maintain aesthetic.	Regular (less frequent).
Replace dead or damaged plants	Ensure facility has sufficient vegetation to operate.	As needed.
Repair or replace broken structural components (e.g., inlets, pipes, barriers)	Maintain structural integrity. Ensure proper stormwater infiltration.	As needed.

Source: Philadelphia Water Department, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Table 6-4: Common Maintenance Activities for Permeable Pavement

Activity	Purpose	Frequency
Inspect facility	Determine what maintenance activities should be performed. Identify any issues. Assess BMP functionality.	Regular.
Remove trash, sediment, other debris	Prevent clogging that reduces the amount of stormwater infiltrating the BMP. Maintain aesthetic.	Regular.
Vacuum surface	Remove sediment. Prevent deeper clogging that decreases permeability.	Regular. Less frequent "deep cleans" may also be required, where vacuuming is paired with pressure washing to remove deeper clogs.
Repair or replace cracked or damaged concrete; replace broken or missing pavers	Maintain structural integrity. Remove safety hazard. Ensure proper stormwater infiltration.	As needed.
Plow snow and apply deicing treatment	Provide safe access.	Snow or freeze events. Permeable pavements may require less deicing application than non-permeable pavements and may become clogged by overapplication of salt or sand.

Source: Philadelphia Water Department, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Beyond standard maintenance, conditions such as such as standing water more than 48 hours after rainfall, significant structural damage to pavement or pipes, or high levels of erosion could indicate a larger problem with the facility that may require deeper inspection and more involved repair.[lxxviii] [lxxix]

While green streets may cost more initially than traditional gray infrastructure, many elements may ultimately require less maintenance and have a longer lifespan, resulting in less cost expended on repairs and replacement.[lxxx] Performing a lifecycle cost analysis may demonstrate the long-term benefit of a green street project and justify project investment. Estimates of initial and ongoing costs for several types of green infrastructure are provided in Appendix B. Cost Considerations.

Capacity-Building & Public Engagement

Implementation should be supported by staff training, technical guidance, and public education. Municipal staff must be equipped to manage green infrastructure systems, while community members should be informed about the function and appearance of these features to build long-term support. Engaging residents and stakeholders early in the process improves stewardship and reduces maintenance burdens.

Performance Monitoring & Adaptive Management

Establishing performance metrics such as stormwater capture, pollutant load reduction, vegetation health, and multimodal safety allows agencies to evaluate effectiveness and refine design standards over time. Monitoring supports data-driven decision-making and ensures that green street investments achieve intended environmental and transportation outcomes.[lxxxi]

Moving Forward

While existing resources provide a useful basis for green street implementation, addressing regional gaps in policy and planning can provide certainty and increase the attractiveness of green street projects.

Policy Gaps

Currently, policy gaps such as limited stormwater performance standards for transportation corridors, inconsistent tree canopy replacement requirements, and lack of regional maintenance funding discourage green street investment. Addressing these gaps will facilitate green street implementation.

Standards would allow planners, engineers, and agencies a baseline from which to establish actionable processes for incorporating BMPs, street trees, and other green street elements in transportation corridor projects. By adopting standards or implementing a policy to require standards be considered in transportation projects, a region encourages green street implementation. Coordination between jurisdictions in the region with regard to adoption of standards creates a consistent and reliable policy landscape over a broad area and reduces planning uncertainty.

Creating or identifying a steady funding stream for regional maintenance of green streets would reduce uncertainty around long-term viability. If maintenance can be reliably funded, agencies can be more confident that green street implementation is worth the upfront costs.

Key Takeaways

Green streets are investments in resilience, mobility, and economic vitality, providing benefits not only to specific corridors but to the community as a whole. Green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs), the key feature of a green street, reduce flood risk and severity. Implementing bicycle and pedestrian facilities protects non-motorized users; implementing traffic-calming measures such as chicanes and street trees reduces risk for motorists. Expanding the urban tree canopy reduces heat exposure and filters pollutants, improving community health and extending the lifespan of infrastructure. An investment in green streets signals an investment in the well-being of a community, creating a more resilient and appealing place to live, work, and travel.

This Green Streets Guide provides a basis for implementing sustainable streetscape development in the Rockford Region and is intended for practical use by planners, engineers, and local officials. This guide also serves as the first step for a Green Streets Plan, which identifies priority corridors within the Rockford Region that would benefit from green stormwater infrastructure and develops corridor design concepts for green street implementation.

The following summarizes the primary findings and recommendations presented throughout this guide:

- Green streets use stormwater best management practices to mitigate flood risk, manage runoff, and improve water quality.
- Beyond stormwater management, green streets provide safety, economic, and community livability benefits.
- The elements included in a green street facility can and should be customized based on the characteristics and needs of the corridor.
- Green streets are proven technology. Projects from around the United States, including Illinois, have seen measurable benefits from successful implementation of green streets.
- Green street elements should be planned from the beginning of a roadway project or incorporated into existing capital projects to maximize cost effectiveness and ease of implementation.
- The cost of green street implementation and maintenance can be addressed through multiple possible funding streams, including state and federal grants, public-private partnerships, and local funding mechanisms such as property taxes, user fees, and transportation-related charges.
- Coordination between municipalities, transportation agencies, utilities, and other stakeholders is critical to streamline implementation, align project goals, and support long-term success of green street infrastructure.
- Creating a maintenance plan and budgeting maintenance costs from the beginning of a green street project ensures long-term upkeep, increasing project longevity and return on investment.
- Addressing policy gaps, such as creating or adopting regional policy or standards for green street infrastructure, provides guidance, consistency, and certainty for stakeholders interested in implementing green streets.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Date: October 30, 2026

To: R1 Governing Board, North COG, MPO Policy and Technical Committees

From: Michael Dunn, Executive Director

Re: Proposed 2027 Regular Committee Meeting Schedule

In accordance with the Illinois Open Meeting Act, an annual calendar of regular meetings shall be posted. Below for your consideration is a 2027 meeting schedule for the Region 1 Planning Council governing board, executive, and policy committees.

R1 Governing Board

Governing Board is held at 8:00 am at Region 1 Planning Council, 127 N. Wyman St.

Thursday, February 4

Thursday, May 13

Thursday, September 9

Thursday, November 14

Executive Committee/MPO Policy/NorthCOG

Executive Committee is held at 7:30 am at Region 1 Planning Council, 127 N. Wyman St. MPO Policy Committee immediately follows, at 8:30 am. NorthCOG immediately follows, at 9:00 am.

Friday, January 29

Friday, March 19

Friday, April 30

Friday, June 25

Friday, August 20

Friday, October 29

MPO Technical Committee

Meetings are held at 10:00 am at Region 1 Planning Council

Thursday, January 21

Thursday, February 25

Thursday, March 18

Thursday, April 22

Thursday, May 27

Thursday, June 24

Thursday, July 22

Thursday, August 19

Thursday, September 16

Thursday, October 28

Thursday, November 18