



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Region 1 Planning Council Completes Safety Audits for 17 Schools Delivered Customized List of Improvements, Now Ready for Funding

ROCKFORD, IL – Region 1 Planning Council (R1) has completed school zone safety audits at 17 schools across five regional school districts, providing each district with a detailed list of safety concerns and recommended improvements.

Under the School Zone Safety Program, a regional initiative funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation, R1 staff conducted field audits and prepared a report of its findings specific to each participating school. Districts also received a packet of at-home safety activities for students and families. School districts that opted in to the field analysis were Belvidere 100, Byron 226, Harlem 122, Kinnikinnick 131, and North Boone 200.

“Pedestrian and bicyclists are some of our most vulnerable commuters, especially in high-traffic areas like school pick up and drop off zones,” said Tim Verbeke, R1 Director of Planning. “By giving districts a customized list of recommendations, we are making it as easy as possible for them to take action.”

School districts can use the findings to seek implementation funding and prioritize infrastructure upgrades in their long-range capital plans.

The audits evaluated infrastructure, including crosswalk visibility, sidewalk condition, and entrance accessibility, as well as behavior such as helmet use, driver speeds in school zones, and crash history. Parents could also complete a survey to provide their feedback.

An additional 38 schools in the region’s Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) received a report that included a regional safety overview, national traffic safety data, and the student activity packet, even if they did not opt in to the audit. The MPA is composed of the metropolitan areas of Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties.

To read the regional report and view additional program details, visit <https://engage-r1.com/school-zones-safety-program>.

ABOUT THE MPO – Region 1 Planning Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). An MPO is federally required for all urban areas with populations over 50,000. It includes representatives from municipal governments to oversee transportation planning and policy, and distribute

federal funding for roads, public transit, and active transportation within the MPA. The Rockford region's MPA includes Rockford, Machesney Park, Loves Park, Belvidere, Roscoe, Rockton, Winnebago, and Byron.

ABOUT R1 – [Region 1 Planning Council](#) is a special-purpose government agency providing cross-jurisdictional, government-to-government collaborative planning for Northern Illinois. The regional planning model provides an efficient means to promoting an informed, comprehensive dialogue that holistically addresses regional issues by fulfilling the needs of government entities for long-range planning, securing funding, and analyzing and providing data in support of regional projects and initiatives.

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