



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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SS4A plans offer strategies for safer road travel across the region

ROCKFORD, IL — Even one death on northern Illinois roadways is unacceptable. Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is working to prevent serious injuries and fatalities on the region's roads through four Traffic Safety Action plans. The plans cover Winnebago County, Boone County, the City of Rockford, and the three-county Metropolitan Planning Area (Boone, Ogle, Winnebago counties), representing a regional commitment to the safety of all road users, whether walking, driving, or biking.

"We want to make the streets safer for people, whether they are traveling by vehicle, bike, foot, or some other way," said Tim Verbeke, R1 Director of Planning. "Each comprehensive plan looks at the safety improvements that are the most impactful to our community."

The plans provide recommendations for risky behaviors such as speeding or impaired driving, and to promote safety measures like helmets or child safety seats. Recommended infrastructure solutions include greater pedestrian visibility, protected lanes, safer intersection design, and roadway departure warnings such as rumble strips.

"Traffic safety needs to be a regional effort. Every improvement made in Loves Park, Boone County, or urban Rockford helps more people to get home safely," said Greg Jury, Loves Park mayor. "This regional approach makes each investment go further."

The plans were developed through a 2023 Federal Highway Administration Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A) grant. The goal of SS4A is to reduce or eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries for all road users. Under this grant, R1 identified high-injury areas within the transportation network, evaluated roadway safety challenges, and recommended safety improvements across the regional transportation system.

"Winnebago County will continue advocating for smarter intersections, clearer signage, and other data-driven solutions to reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roadways," said Joe Chiarelli, Winnebago County Board Chairman. "I am proud of the collaborative work that went into these plans and look forward to implementation."

The MPO Policy Committee, Winnebago County Board, and Boone County Board have approved their respective plans. These agencies, together with R1, will secure and apply future U.S. Department of Transportation traffic safety funding to implement strategies. Using the Safe System Approach, the plans outline proven, data-driven strategies to reduce the

likelihood of crashes and reduce injury severity when crashes occur. Recommendations emphasize practical, cost-effective measures that deliver meaningful safety improvements while enhancing mobility for all road users.

Read the plans at the links below:

[Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)

- [Technical Report #1: Economic Impact Analysis](#)
- [Technical Report #2: High Risk Network](#)

[Winnebago County Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)

[Boone County Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)

[City of Rockford Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)

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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