



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Midtown Neighborhood Latest Recipient of Neighborhood Revitalization Planning Assistance

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ROCKFORD, IL – Reducing blight, boosting local businesses, raising neighborhood pride. Midtown neighborhood was recently given the opportunity to receive planning support in order for its residents to help invigorate the place they call home.

The Midtown neighborhood was awarded technical assistance through R1's Livable Community Initiative (LCI), the second Rockford neighborhood to receive support through this program. The Keith Creek neighborhood received technical assistance in 2025 to address flooding concerns and is beginning the implementation phase of the program.

As an LCI awardee, Midtown community members will spend the next year working alongside R1 to develop a plan to tackle the neighborhood's most pressing livability challenges, as determined by residents. R1 will provide coordination and support during the process. Like Keith Creek, Midtown will later be eligible to receive implementation funding once the plan has been completed.

"A strength of the LCI program is that it is entirely community-driven, leveraging residents' vision to improve their neighborhoods through support from both public and private partners," said Chloe Barnes, R1 Regional Planner and program coordinator. "Community input is essential to the program's success, as residents understand their neighborhood the best."

Planning will begin in February 2026 with a series of community meetings to generate implementation ideas.

Midtown neighborhood's selection was also community-driven. Members of the R1 Community Advisory Forum, which is composed of representatives from a range of regional community organizations, including housing, government, social

services, sustainability, and nonprofit, evaluated each LCI applicant. Midtown achieved the highest overall ranking and was formally recommended to the R1 Governing Board, which approved the award on November 13.

In their proposal, representatives from the Midtown neighborhood expressed interest in addressing blight, including transforming identified warehouses into livable spaces. However, the application is an early vision provided by the applicant. Through ongoing engagement with Midtown residents, the final design may evolve to reflect the community's collective vision.

The Livable Communities Initiative began in 2024 to improve middle neighborhoods' quality of life through sustainable, accessible, vibrant development. Middle neighborhoods are those that are teetering between growth and decline and often lack jurisdictional funds for investment. LCI begins to address this gap by providing planning support and funding to restore these neighborhoods. Key livability topics addressed through LCI are affordable housing, transportation, public spaces, and economic development.

A third round of LCI technical assistance is expected to be announced in mid-2026.

Links

General information about LCI program: <https://r1planning.org/planning/livable-communities-initiative/>

Midtown neighborhood project page: <https://engager1.mysocialpinpoint.com/midtown-livable-communities-initiative>

Keith Creek neighborhood project page: <https://engager1.mysocialpinpoint.com/keith-creek-lci>

ABOUT R1 – [Region 1 Planning Council](#) is a special-purpose, regional government agency providing cross-jurisdictional, government-to-government collaborative planning for Northern Illinois. The regional planning model provides an efficient means to promoting a well-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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