



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Rockford Region MPO Named One of Best in Nation for Comprehensive Complete Streets Policy

ROCKFORD, IL – The Rockford Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (Rockford MPO) was recently recognized as having one of the best Complete Streets policies in the nation. Smart Growth America listed the Rockford MPO as #8 in its *Best Complete Streets Policies 2025* report, with San Antonio in the top spot. Region 1 Planning Council (R1) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford region.

The Rockford MPO was the only Metropolitan Planning Organization included in the top ten policies – the remainder were municipalities. Additionally, the Rockford MPO covers a diverse region consisting of three counties that are a mix of rural and urban areas.

“As Chair of our Metropolitan Planning Organization, I am incredibly proud that we have been recognized as 8th nationally for our Complete Streets Policies by Smart Growth America,” said Joe Chiarelli, Winnebago County Chairman.

“Studies show these investments can deliver a 10:1 return— drawing business investment to our community, creating jobs, and strengthening our tax base. I want to thank the MPO staff and community partners who helped shape this forward-thinking policy.”

Smart Growth America evaluated all Complete Streets policies adopted in 2023 or 2024 for their comprehensiveness, inclusivity, and dedication to regional coordination. R1’s policy, adopted in May 2024, received perfect scores in these categories:

- Commitment & vision
- Prioritizes underserved communities
- Applies to all projects and phases
- Mandates collaboration
- Includes a project prioritization process

“Earning perfect scores in five critical categories demonstrates that our region is serious about creating safer, more accessible streets for everyone,” said Thomas McNamara, Mayor of Rockford. “Complete Streets policies aren’t just about infrastructure; they’re about safety, quality of life, and economic growth. These are returns that extend far beyond Rockford’s city limits.”

"I truly appreciate this national recognition for our hard work in representing best practices in innovative complete street policies," said Michael Dunn, Jr., R1 Executive Director. "Our agency continues to gain recognition nationwide as a high-performing Federal Metropolitan Planning Organization. I am grateful to our board of elected and appointed officials for their continual support.

"I think this recognition acknowledges the hard work and knowledge current and past staff have contributed to our region."

About Complete Streets

Complete Streets are recommended design guidelines that ensure everyone - pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, motorists - has safe and accessible travel throughout the community. The Rockford MPO's policy includes these principles into all transportation plans within the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area. Elements that can be included in a Complete Street are better lighting, bus stop shelters, wider intersections, or additional shared use paths.

To read the full report, visit <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/signature-reports/best-complete-streets/>

To view Rockford MPO's Complete Streets policy, visit <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CCi1B3J67x5yeU0BG5uRsPRGLVed1oXK/view>

A MPO is responsible for planning and coordinating decisions regarding the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area's surface transportation system. This includes elements such as transportation alternatives (bike paths, accessible sidewalks), public transit, bridges, rail, resident quality of life, and traffic safety in addition to road construction and maintenance. The Metropolitan Planning Area encompasses the urbanized areas of Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties.

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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