



Media Release

For Immediate Release

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2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Draft Update Available for Public Comment

ROCKFORD, IL – Region 1 Planning Council (RPC) is seeking public comment on the draft of the five-year update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Economic Development District. A 30-day comment period is afforded to the public to review and provide feedback on the draft CEDS.

The draft CEDS and supplemental information can be viewed at <http://r1planning.org/ceds>. Please note that this draft CEDS does not incorporate a final design or full suite of appendices. Any changes that occur during this period will be recorded and included as an appendix item in the final document.

Public comments will be accepted regarding the 2021-2025 CEDS from October 16, 2020, until November 16, 2020. Comments may be submitted by email, telephone, or written comments. Organization contact information is listed below:

Region 1 Planning Council
Attn: CEDS Update
127 N Wyman St, First Floor, Rockford, IL 61101
Phone: (815) 319-4180
Email: info@r1planning.org

Please include your city, village, or county of association within your comments.

About the 2021-2025 CEDS

As its name implies, a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) lays out a regional plan for area economic development. Its ultimate goal is to promote a stronger, more diverse, and resilient regional economy. While the CEDS' most critical function is to provide a regional economic development framework, it also serves as a required vehicle through which some federal agencies (especially the US Economic Development Administration) evaluate requests for grant assistance. With a CEDS plan approved by the federal government, a region is eligible to apply for federal economic development grants.

(more)

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Winnebago and Boone counties created the region's first CEDS in 2010 through a process that aligned public sector, private sector, nonprofit and community partners, as well as public input, into a plan for regional development. The CEDS has successfully aided the region in receiving the following grants from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA):

- A \$6.1 million State of Ingenuity grant collaboration between Boone/Winnebago counties and Wisconsin counties to promote entrepreneurship and innovation programs.
- A \$2.7 million public works grant to upgrade roads around Chicago Rockford International Airport.
- A \$1.8 million Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge grant (through EDA and other federal agencies) to promote the region's -aerospace cluster.

While preparing for the 2015 update of the CEDS, Winnebago and Boone counties began working with McHenry County more closely on collaboration to advance the shared manufacturing industries in the wider region. As McHenry County did not have a CEDS, it was agreed that the three counties would work together on the next CEDS update.

The EDA emphasizes that the CEDS is a *planning process* that includes representation from the main economic interests of the region including private sector representatives, public officials, community leaders, private individuals, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, non-profit organizations and educational institutions. A CEDS Steering Committee is charged with leading the effort and incorporating public input along the way.

The document outlines a *development strategy* rather than a laundry list of projects. Although an exhaustive list of projects is not a requirement, the CEDS Steering Committee identifies a list of *key projects* that are prioritized in line with regional assets and that will further the regional development strategy laid out in the document. These projects may in turn qualify for EDA programs, including those that provide capital investment funding.

If you have any questions about the CEDS plan or the planning process, please contact Isaac Guerrero at iguerrero@r1planning.org or call (815) 319-4180.

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