



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS



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Partnership Results in \$16.4 Million Grant for Rockford

ROCKFORD, III. – Earlier this week, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) announced the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will receive a \$16,384,905 RAISE grant for the Downtown Complete Streets Revitalization Project. RAISE, Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, is a federal grant program, which funds transportation projects that create high-quality jobs, improve safety, protect the environment, and generate equitable economic opportunities. The grant, written by Region 1 Planning Council, will invest in the reconstruction of Chestnut and Walnut streets and will provide funding to Rockford Mass Transit District for three battery electric buses.

The project will provide investment and innovation to traditionally underserved populations that reside in and around the project area. With higher than average populations of low income, people of color and elderly residents in downtown Rockford, the project represents a significant equity investment. These underserved populations will gain greater access to essential services like healthcare, workforce support and education services all while gaining greater access to the rapidly growing amenity-based economy of downtown Rockford.

Reducing the numbers of lanes on Chestnut/Walnut Street will help increase roadway safety by reducing vehicle crashes along the current four-lane one-way and will allow for the implementation of a bi-directional bike path and other pedestrian improvements. A downtown circulator route will be established to connect the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center and UW Health Sports Factory to the south, UW Health/Swedish American Hospital to the east, the Riverfront Museum Campus to the north, and the U.S. District Court to the west.

Other locations that can be accessed along or near the proposed route include the Social Security Office, the RMTD Downtown Transfer Center, Rockford Public Library downtown branch, Riverfront Museum Park, the Coronado Theater, BMO Harris Bank Center, several public and low-income housing sites and the Family Peace Center. This service will be a benefit not only to visitors and downtown workers, but also to low-income residents and others who may not have access to a car.

The three new battery electric buses will run the downtown circulator route, as well as be part of RMTD's regular fleet operation. The battery electric buses could reduce diesel fuel consumption by 35,600 gallons per year for RMTD. The buses are zero emission vehicles and the miles between road calls are anticipated to triple, thus bringing more efficiencies to RMTD's internal maintenance shop operation.

"We are incredibly grateful to Senators Durbin and Duckworth for their advocacy on behalf of Rockford for these federal funds," says Mayor McNamara. "This project will help connect our residents to community assets including work, essential services and recreational opportunities."

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