



## For Immediate Release

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## Region 1 Planning Council Wins National Award for Its Land Bank

**Rockford, IL** – Region 1 Planning Council is pleased to announce winning nationwide recognition at the National Association of Regional Councils ([NARC](#)) 56th Annual Conference and Exhibition in Columbus, Ohio. On Tuesday, June 14, 2022, the “**Medium Metro Achievement Award**” was awarded for creating a regional multi-jurisdictional land bank, and embedding its operation and governance in the regional planning council. This integration allows for a planning organization to shape the land bank’s strategy and work. The *Achievement Award* is given to an exceptional program or project for regions in North America with populations between 250,000 and 1 million. The National Association of Regional Councils is open to over 500+ regional planning councils across the United States.

[NARC Achievement Awards](#) are presented each year to several organizations to recognize excellence in programs and services of regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO’s) across the country. NARC Leadership Awards recognize regional programs in the following categories:

- The Major Metro Award recognizes programs from regions with populations of 1 million and above.
- The Medium Metro Award recognizes programs from regions with populations between 250,000 and 1 million.
- The Rural Award recognizes programs from regions with populations below 250,000.

“Our land bank would not be possible if not for the leadership shown by our elected board of mayors and county chairmen, coming together for the region to form a land bank, and trusting our agency to operate it on their behalf. The risk taking and leadership shown by our board members has resulted in a phenomenal result both in economic impact, neighborhood revitalization, and in fostering an integrated approach towards long term planning and actual, physical blight reduction. We have set an example both in Illinois and throughout the country of how a technically driven land bank, unified across planning staff and regional leaders, can make a quick impact in its first two years. Eric Setter (Land Bank Coordinator) and the rest of our staff made this national recognition possible, and we look forward to future innovative partnerships in this community.” explained Michael Dunn Jr., Executive Director of Region 1 who was present to receive the award.

**ABOUT NARC:** For over 50 years, the National Association of Regional Council’s has represented the interests of its members and has advanced regional cooperation through effective interaction and advocacy with Congress, federal officials, and other related agencies and interest groups. NARC’s agenda includes transportation, economic and community development, energy and environment, public safety, and a variety of community issues undertaken by its member organizations. NARC is headquartered in Washington, DC.

**ABOUT LAND BANK:** The Region 1 Planning Council Land Bank exists to effectively acquire abandoned and tax delinquent properties to allow for private sector redevelopment. Hundreds of properties each year qualify as legally abandoned under Illinois state statute. These properties sit at length, often years, vacant and deteriorating, with no payment of property taxes. With a land bank, vacant properties that are unmarketable due to tax liens can be acquired

and returned to the private sector in a cost-effective manner, putting an end to the vicious cycle of declining equalized assessed valuations and abandoned properties in communities.

**ABOUT R1:** Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is a special-purpose, regional government agency. Regional councils are public organizations comprised of local elected officials that promote collaboration among local governments, working across the jurisdictional silos of states, counties, and municipalities. A regional council depends on intergovernmental collaboration to foster economic and community growth; through planning, research, federal funding, and data.

For more information, visit [www.r1planning.org](http://www.r1planning.org).

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