



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Climate Resiliency Forum

Tuesday, November 7th, 2023 – 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Region 1 Planning Council

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment
4. Action Item: Approval of the Meeting Minutes of September 26, 2023
5. Presentation: Climate Resiliency Forum – SWOT Survey Results
6. Presentation: Update on the Planning Process
7. Discussion: 2025 Climate Action Plan – Goals and Strategies
8. Staff Reports
9. Agency Reports
10. Other Business
11. Adjournment

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Climate Resiliency Forum

Tuesday, September 26th, 2023 – 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Region 1 Planning Council

AGENDA

1) **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm

2) **Roll Call**

Members Present: Collin Belle, City of Rockford Planning and Zoning; Jeremy Mitchell, City of Rockford Public Works; Mike Bacon, Climate Reality Project; Neely Erickson, Illinois Realtors; Orlando Toatley, Rockford Mass Transit District; Tim Bragg, Rockford Park District; Ann Wasser, Severson Dells; Brad Roos, Sustain Rockford; Todd Marshall, Winnebago County Health Department, Sean Von Bergen, Winnebago County Highway Department

Staff Present: Gabrielle Gamily, Austin Powell, Lauren Kleve, Nathan Larsen, Autumn Carlson

3) **Public Comment**

a) No public comment

4) **Action Items**

a) **Approval of the Meeting Minutes of July 25, 2023**

i) Motion by Sustain Rockford, Seconded by Winnebago County Health Department, Minutes Approved

5) **Presentation: Water**

a) R1 Staff gave a presentation with the ongoing efforts related to the IEPA Section 319 Watershed and Outreach grant.

i) R1 staff detailed the purpose of the project, its timeline, and discussed a number of watershed best management practices. These best management practices include:

- Bioretention Basins
- Bioswales

ii) R1 staff showed two project implementation sites, detailing the public engagement process that will be implemented throughout.



- iii) A member of the public raised the question about the use of this grant, with R1 Staff and Winnebago County Highway Department highlighting the multi-faceted nature of this project being useful to the public for both building these sites and the education related to these areas.
- iv) Sustain Rockford raised a comment over the proliferation of Canadian geese throughout the area and the health risks related to these new sites if they are not mitigated in some shape or form.
- v) Climate Reality Project raised a question about water sampling in the area. The City of Rockford Public Works department responded that Kent Creek has been monitored at least 4 times a year, however there needs to be further review into existing data.
- vi) Illinois Realtors raised a comment on the need for additional maintenance with park district equipment in order to prevent any invasive species from being carried over to a bioswale or other solution.

6) **SWOT Analysis Activity: Water**

- a) R1 Staff gave a presentation on what is a SWOT analysis as well as how it will be applied in the activity.
- b) Time was given to stakeholders to identify *strengths* within the Region. This session included questions from R1 Staff to guide stakeholder answers.
 - Stakeholders shared their answers (examples include):
 1. Pollutant levels have been decreasing among the five creeks that the City of Rockford have been monitoring over the years.
 2. Increased work among the city to monitor creeks and implement best management practices.
 3. Existing programs through partnerships with key stakeholders.
 4. Monitoring of agricultural runoff along the Rock River and Kishwaukee River.
 5. Total Maximum Daily Load study through the Pecatonica River
 6. Kishwaukee River Green Infrastructure Plan
 7. Existing supply of groundwater that doesn't need to tap into Lake Michigan.
 8. Macro-invertebrate study in Keith Creek showing many species.
 9. Existing geologic and soil reports.
 10. Existence of grassroots/citizen led volunteer cleanup programs.
 11. Field Trips to Four Rivers Sanitation Authority for Field Trips.
- c) Time was given to stakeholders to identify *weaknesses* within the Region. This session included questions from R1 Staff to guide stakeholder answers.
 - Stakeholders shared their answers (examples include):



1. The vulnerability of groundwater aquifers to groundwater contamination.
 2. Rock River is at high phosphorous levels
 3. Need to update groundwater aquifer and geologic studies within Boone and Winnebago County.
 4. The public does not understand the water-related issues such as consumption.
 5. Wasting existing water though its conveyance through existing infrastructure.
 6. Collapsing draining pipes
 7. Aging out infrastructure that causes leakages for water.
 8. Lack of Funding is a major impediment to action throughout the region.
 9. Cost to the homeowner to connect water lines to the city lines.
- d) Time was given to stakeholders to identify *opportunities* within the Region. This session included question from R1 Staff to guide stakeholder answers.
- Stakeholders shared their answers (examples include):
 1. More efforts into coordinating with farmers to put in more bioswales and other uses.
 2. Home Depot providing in-home water quality tests.
 3. Winnebago Health Department has been aggressive to get lead pipe grants through the state or federal government to switch out aging infrastructure.
 4. Incorporate best management practices
 5. Review funding opportunities through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act.
 6. Need for regulations that help achieve specific goals related to water ordinances, management, or monitoring.
 7. Winnebago County is a pilot county for a PFAS educational program.
- e) Time was given to stakeholders to identify *threats* within the Region. This session included questions from R1 Staff to guide stakeholder answers.
- Stakeholders shared their answers (examples include):
 1. The movement of developers to other towns if a city ordinance is too stringent on water runoff or quality issues.
 2. There are only a few municipal providers available for wells.
 3. Gutting of the Clean Water Act
 4. Increased Risk of Flash Flooding
 5. Increased Risk of Heavy Precipitation
 6. Increased concentration of chlorides in streams and rivers
 7. Leaking private septic tanks into groundwater and surface water
 8. Privatization of Public Water Systems
 9. Increasing cost of water
 10. Not having a long-term vision when it comes to economic stability (water)



7) **Staff Reports**

- a) City of Rockford have been hosting a number of public engagement events to help with flooding mitigation.
- b) Sustain Rockford's monthly movement meeting is upcoming as well as their future plans for a Solar Expo in Rockford.
- c) WCHD reminded folks that the Kishwaukee River is a priority watershed for 2024 IEPA 319 Watershed grants.

8) **Agency Reports**

- a) The final CRF meeting for 2023 will be on November 7th
- b) Drive Electric Week will be ongoing between September 22nd to October 1st
- c) 3 open houses will be held for the CEDS/MTP/CAP through multiple locations over the next few weeks.

9) **Other Business**

- a) No other business

10) **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:26 pm

Meeting minutes prepared by: ATP
Minutes approved by action of the Forum: _____

Climate Action Plan: Update

CLIMATE RESILIENCY FORUM | 11/07/2023

AN ENGINE FOR COLLABORATION
IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS



CLIMATE RESILIENCY FORUM PRIORITIZATION SURVEY

On October 12, a survey was sent to the Climate Resiliency Forum to identify the climate-related strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are perceived as the highest priority in the region.

The survey results, along with feedback from the R1 SWOT Workshops, were used to inform the development of the Climate Action Plan's goals, strategies, and tactics.



AIR QUALITY & EMISSIONS SURVEY RESULTS

Strengths

High volume of trees and greenspace

Attainment of air quality standards

Investment in EV infrastructure

Weaknesses

Industrial emissions

Urban sprawl

Econ growth & development emissions

Indoor air quality

Opportunities

Promoting alternative transportation

Education on climate change & health

Preventative technology for air quality

Threats

Air pollution impacts on natural systems

Lack of education on poor air quality

Insufficient federal & state legislation



NATURAL & WORKING LANDS SURVEY RESULTS

Strengths

Partnerships & regional collaboration

High volume of forest preserves

Conservation programs & initiatives

Weaknesses

Lack of nature-based curriculum

Monocultures

Ineffective policies

Opportunities

BMPs for green infrastructure

Invest in conservation outreach

Policies & zoning for conservation

Threats

Availability of future funding

Misinformation on climate change impacts

Extreme weather & natural disaster



WATER SURVEY RESULTS

Strengths

Affordable & drinkable water

Water habitats & systems in plans

Pollutant levels decreasing

Weaknesses

Lack of public understanding water systems

Lack of education on water quality

Agricultural runoff

Opportunities

New development to include BMPs

Educate on water quality & systems

Greenspace in areas prone to flooding

Threats

Flooding

Lack of education

Improper disposal of chemicals



UPDATE ON THE PLANNING PROCESS

SYDNEY TURNER, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN GOALS

1. Improve the region's **air quality** and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Promote strategic and climate-resilient development within the **built environment**.
3. Improve **energy** resilience by advancing clean energy and energy efficiency efforts.
4. Cultivate a conservation mindset to preserve, restore, and sustainably manage **natural and working lands**.
5. Promote sustainable **waste management** practices and technology.
6. Support **water** resource management.
7. Support **communities** in preparing for the current and future effects of climate change.



GOAL 1. IMPROVE THE REGION'S AIR QUALITY AND REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS.

Strategy 1.1. Reduce regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

- Incentivize industry and manufacturing emissions reduction initiatives.

Strategy 1.2. Maintain and improve air quality.

- Incentivize compliance of federal air quality standards by businesses.
- Encourage local governments to establish policies that meet Illinois Department of Public Health Indoor Air quality guidelines.



GOAL 2. PROMOTE STRATEGIC AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

Strategy 2.1. Support sustainable development practices that improve community resilience.

Strategy 2.2. Minimize environmental impacts on infrastructure.

Strategy 2.3. Mitigate the urban heat island effect and reduce exposure to extreme heat.

Strategy 2.4 Enhance quality of life through improved access to opportunities.



GOAL 3. IMPROVE ENERGY RESILIENCE BY ADVANCING CLEAN ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY EFFORTS.

Strategy 3.1. Strengthen energy infrastructure to handle climate impacts and increased energy demand.

Strategy 3.2. Promote clean energy and energy efficiency efforts through educational initiatives.

Strategy 3.3. Increase clean energy jobs and energy training programs.



GOAL 4. CULTIVATE A CONSERVATION MINDSET TO PRESERVE, RESTORE, AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGE NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS.

Strategy 4.1. Preserve and sustainably manage the natural environment.

- Collaborate with local partners to provide educational training and opportunities to inform the public about preservation and conservation.

Strategy 4.2. Restore the region's native biodiversity and habitats.

- Revise local ordinances and zoning codes to support native conservation practices and biodiversity.

Strategy 4.3. Increase knowledge and implementation of sustainable agriculture and land management practices.

- Support local farmers in implementing best management practices through technical assistance programs.



GOAL 5. PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGY.

Strategy 5.1. Increase landfill diversion rate and support sustainable material management.

Strategy 5.2. Incentivize waste emissions reductions and the use of emerging technologies.

Strategy 5.3. Identify and address community solid waste needs.



GOAL 6. SUPPORT WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

Strategy 6.1. Promote drought planning practices to prevent water scarcity.

Strategy 6.2. Protect water quality for drinking water and aquatic habitats.

- Implement stormwater best management practices in areas prone to flooding and communities with high water quality contamination.

Strategy 6.3. Increase education on water conservation and water quality to minimize pollution and prepare for any potential changes to the water supply.

- Implement educational campaigns on common water contaminants and mitigation options.



GOAL 7. SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN PREPARING FOR THE CURRENT AND FUTURE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

Strategy 7.1. Improve community resiliency and emergency response in preparation for climate disasters.

Strategy 7.2. Establish the Rockford Region as a climate haven.

Strategy 7.3. Ensure climate investments address community inequities.



NEXT STEPS

- CRF to review the proposed goals, strategies, and tactics.
- Action items are to be reviewed more in-depth at the next CRF meeting.
- Any feedback can be shared with Lauren Kleve or Gabi Gamily.



PROJECT CONTACT

Lauren Kleve,
Environmental Planner
LKleve@R1planning.org



Climate Action Plan

Goals, Strategies, & Tactics

Goal 1. Improve the region's air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Strategy 1.1. Reduce regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

- Reduce transportation emissions by supporting the electrification of fleet vehicles.
- Incentivize industry and manufacturing emissions reduction initiatives.

Strategy 1.2. Maintain and improve air quality.

- Reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions for municipal operations by using low-VOC cleaning, painting, and paving practices.
- Discourage the use of high-emitting small engines through educational initiatives and incentives, such as an electric lawn mower rebate program.
- Incentivize compliance of federal air quality standards by businesses.
- Encourage local governments to establish policies to meet Illinois Department of Public Health Indoor Air quality guidelines.

Goal 2. Promote strategic and climate-resilient development within the built environment.

Strategy 2.1. Support sustainable development practices that improve community resilience.

- Reduce urban sprawl by promoting infill development.
- Conduct a feasibility study on the development of an urban growth boundary for the Rockford Region.
- Revise zoning ordinances to allow urban agriculture.
- Establish and implement building performance standards for new development to meet energy use and GHG emissions federal targets.
- Encourage and support local governments to adopt green and complete street policies and practices.
- Support the interconnectedness of a regional greenways system to balance natural areas with land use development and reduce environmental stressors.

Strategy 2.2. Minimize environmental impacts on infrastructure.

- Assess the adaptability of current infrastructure to respond to future rainfall and storm projections.
- Develop resilient design standards to upgrade vulnerable infrastructure.

Strategy 2.3. Mitigate the urban heat island effect and reduce exposure to extreme heat.

- Facilitate the reduction of heat absorption by covering or replacing impervious surfaces with cooling materials.
- Increase tree and vegetation cover through urban greening practices such as tree plantings, installing green roofs, and developing urban forestry plans.
- Retrofit buildings and revise building codes to incorporate cool or "green" designs.

- Install temperature sensors to monitor land surface temperature and perform an urban heat inventory.

Strategy 2.4. Enhance quality of life through improved access to opportunities.

- Ensure all traditionally underserved communities have access to public natural lands and open spaces.
- Address sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bicycle network gaps that impact connectivity.
- Incentivize mixed-use development.
- Encourage redevelopment and infill to maximize existing infrastructure.

Goal 3: Improve energy resilience by advancing clean energy and energy efficiency efforts.

Strategy 3.1. Strengthen energy infrastructure to handle climate impacts and increased energy demand.

- Identify funding opportunities that advance clean energy initiatives.
- Support partnerships that increase the resiliency and reliability of the energy grid system.
- Diversify, incentivize, and expand energy supply and storage.
- Improve backup power supply for energy grid disruptions.
- Relocate vulnerable facilities out of high-risk zones.
- Improve zoning codes to include clean energy or “green” standards.

Strategy 3.2. Promote clean energy and energy efficiency efforts through educational initiatives.

- Promote heating and cooling energy efficiency initiatives, such as promoting available Weatherization Assistance Programs.
- Increase public literacy on energy and education on nuclear energy.
- Educate public and private entities about clean energy opportunities, like ComEd and Nicor energy incentives, and emphasize the competitive advantages of low-cost energy.

Strategy 3.3. Increase clean energy jobs and energy training programs.

- Invest in workforce development programming for clean energy jobs.
- Collaborate with local partners to advance recruitment and training programs.
- Collaborate with private and university partners to support technology and information dissemination.

Goal 4. Cultivate a conservation mindset to preserve, restore, and sustainably manage natural and working lands.

Mitigation: Strategy 4.1. Preserve and sustainably manage the natural environment.

- Prioritize the conservation and restoration of forests, wetlands, and grasslands for carbon sequestration and storage.
- Identify and protect ecologically significant areas from development and land-use change.
- Collaborate with local partners to provide educational training and opportunities to inform the public about opportunities for preservation and conservation.

Strategy 4.2. Restore the region’s native biodiversity and habitats.

- Connect landscapes with greenways to enable species migrations.

- Promote and support habitat restoration and invasive species management, including native plantings in public spaces.
- Revise local ordinances and zoning codes to support native conservation practices and biodiversity.
- Host events to promote education and removal of invasive species in the region.

Strategy 4.3. Increase knowledge and implementation of sustainable agriculture and land management practices.

- Support local farmers in implementing best management practices through technical assistance programs.
- Incentivize local farmers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Identify funding opportunities for agriculture partners in sustainable land management practices and regenerative agriculture, including conservation tillage, cover cropping, and crop rotation.

Goal 5. Promote sustainable waste management practices and technology.

Strategy 5.1. Increase landfill diversion rate and support sustainable material management.

- Increase availability and accessibility of recycling and composting services.
- Adopt circular economy practices to reduce waste consumption and promote recycling, reuse, and repair.
- Incentivize generators, waste haulers, recyclers, composters, and landfill operators to prioritize reducing and reusing materials, then recycling, digesting, and composting the rest.

Strategy 5.2. Incentivize waste emissions reductions and the use of emerging technologies.

- Increase the collection of methane gas from waste treatment facilities.
- Support municipal solid waste plants to use waste-to-energy technology to convert non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity, or fuel.

Strategy 5.2. Identify and address community solid waste needs.

- Engage regularly with residents, business owners, and community leaders on local solid waste issues, targeted materials, needs, and opportunities.
- Encourage communities and businesses to conduct waste audits.
- Identify and address solid waste pollution in traditionally underserved communities.

Goal 6. Support water resource management.

Strategy 6.1. Promote drought planning practices to prevent water scarcity.

- Encourage the use of drought-tolerant plants as part of water conservation, landscaping, and water waste ordinances.
- Explore the implementation of a water impact fee that reflects each property's consumption.
- Increase water storage capacity through aquifer storage and recovery, removing accumulated sediment in reservoirs, and lowering water intake elevation.

Strategy 6.2. Protect water quality for drinking water and aquatic habitats.

- Ensure water quality is maintained in compliance with recognized U.S. and Illinois EPA standards.

- Implement stormwater best management practices in areas prone to flooding and communities with high water quality contamination.
- Increase water quality monitoring efforts near high-priority water systems.
- Encourage and support local governments to adopt codes that protect surface and groundwater from runoff and contamination.

Strategy 6.3. Increase education on water conservation and quality to minimize pollution and prepare for any potential changes to the water supply.

- Educate the public and elected officials on safe and sustainable water resource management.
- Implement educational campaigns on common water contaminants and mitigation options.
- Provide educational events on the hydrological impacts of climate change and groundwater.
- Increase educational signage on watershed best management practices, health of water bodies, and how to improve water quality near local water bodies and locations of implemented projects.

Goal 7: Support communities in preparing for the current and future effects of climate change.

Strategy 7.1. Improve community resiliency and emergency response in preparation for climate disasters.

- Invest in early warning systems.
- Support the implementation of multi-hazard mitigation plans.
- Increase the amount of designated heating and cooling centers.
- Provide educational materials on how to prepare for floods, tornadoes, and extreme temperatures.

Strategy 7.2. Establish the Rockford Region as a climate haven.

- Invest in water resource planning for population growth.
- Identify mechanisms to increase the availability of affordable housing.
- Adapt current infrastructure to support a growing population.
- Encourage the growth and development of employment centers and economic development opportunities to support a growing workforce.
- Cultivate a welcoming environment to support a diverse population of climate refugees.

Strategy 7.3. Ensure climate investments address community inequities.

- Conduct an Equity Audit across all planning documents and programming practices. Increase outreach efforts to traditionally underserved communities during the climate resiliency planning and programming process.
- Advocate for more equitable distribution of federal and state funds.



Date: November 11, 2023

To: Climate Resiliency Forum

From: Gabrielle Gamily, Senior Sustainability Research Analyst

Re: Proposed 2024 Climate Resiliency Forum Regular Committee Meeting Schedule

In accordance with the Illinois Open Meeting Act, an annual calendar of regular meetings shall be posted. Below for your consideration is a 2024 meeting schedule for the Climate Resiliency Forum.

Climate Resiliency Forum

Meetings are held at 4:00 pm at Region 1 Planning at 127 Wyman St.

Tuesday, January 23

Tuesday, March 26

Tuesday, May 28

Tuesday, July 23

Tuesday, September 24

Tuesday, November 4