



## Climate Resiliency Forum

Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 – 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM  
Region 1 Planning Council

### AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm

2. **Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Brad Roos, Sustain Rockford; Collin Belle, City of Rockford Planning and Zoning; Tim Bragg, Rockford Park District; Dennis Anthony, Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District; Dick Rundall, Eliminate Racism 815; Bob Campbell, Zion Development; Mike Bacon, Climate Reality Project; Alan Branhagen, Natural Land Institute; Sean Von Bergen, Winnebago County Highway Department; Todd Marshall, Winnebago County Health Department

**Staff Present:** Gabrielle Gamily, Austin Powell, Lauren Kleve, Juliana Charlebois-Berg, Eric Tison, Nathan Larsen

3. **Public Comment**

a. No Public Comment

4. **Action Item: Approval of the Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2023**

a. Motion by Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District, Seconded by Winnebago County Highway Department, Minutes Approved

5. **Presentation: Climate Action Plan – Goals & Strategies and Engage R1!**

- a. R1 Staff gave a presentation on the current progress of the climate action plan. Current progress includes the drafting of the Introduction, About the Region, Trends & Impacts, Regional Assessment, and the Strategic Direction.
- b. R1 Staff gave an update on the feedback received from the previous Climate Resiliency Forum on the goals and strategies. Three responses were collected and R1 staff integrated these responses into the goals and strategies.

6. **Discussion: Climate Action Plan – Action Items**



- a. A discussion was held on four goals drafted within the Climate Action Plan (CAP). These goals include twelve strategies in total.
  1. Improve the Region’s Air Quality and Reduce GHG Emissions
    - a. Potential inclusions to this goal include decarbonization through solar power, prioritization of walkways and bike paths, the addition of green walls and native plants for improving indoor air quality.
    - b. One specific question raised about whether decarbonization would include ecological solutions in this goal. R1 staff responded that these strategies will be included within the Natural and Working Lands section.
    - c. One question was raised about ensuring that greenhouse gases and air pollutants will be monitored for future efforts. R1 staff responded that these efforts would be codified within the CAP’s implementation matrix.
  2. Promote Strategic and Climate-Resilient Development within the Built Environment
    - a. Within Strategy 2.1, “Conducting a feasibility study on the development of an urban growth boundary for the Rockford Region” was well received and seen as a necessary tactic to employ within the region.
    - b. Sustain Rockford suggested that the American Institute of Architects would be a good external partner for this strategy.
    - c. One suggestion for these goals/strategies was to present them as desired outcomes in order to avoid the use of language such as “promote” or “encourage”
    - d. Rockford Park District suggested methods that would reduce the use of parking lots such as shared lots or parking minimums.
    - e. For Strategy 2.4, suggestions include reducing barriers to roadway crossings such as highways or arterial roads.
    - f. Winnebago County Highway Department recommended including a tactic that would promote maintaining bike paths throughout the year. Annual maintenance to these paths commonly face financial barriers.
  3. Improve Energy Resilience by Advancing Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Efforts
    - a. Discussion was raised about ensuring long-term funding to this goal, and specifying the cost to implement energy efficiency efforts across the region.
    - b. For Strategy 3.3, CEJA’s clean energy workforce training program was suggested as it is designed to address this strategy across the State. This led to the suggestion that the Clean Energy and Jobs Coalition be included as an external partner.



- c. Partnerships with local unions should also be considered to implement this strategy.
  4. Cultivate a Conservation Mindset to Preserve, Restore, and Sustainably Manage Natural And Working Lands
    - a. Partners such as the Natural Land Institute and Severson Dells were seen as ideal partners for helping implement the strategies included within goal four as they have already fostered these programs at their own level.
    - b. Farmers Rising was suggested as a useful external partner for implementing this goal.
    - c. Species migration was brought up as a potential issue, specifically around crossings along highways or seeds from plants.
    - d. University of Illinois Extension was suggested as a partner to help strategize and implement this goal.
  5. Additional Comments
    - a. Rockford Park District recommended the inclusion of anecdotes of how extreme heat or flooding has affected the region (ex: Keith Creek).
    - b. One comment recommended including narrative on how the effects of climate change will increase the costs of insurance in the future.
    - c. Eliminate Racism 815 brought up including language in Strategy 2.2 that prioritizes the use of plants that are effective at mitigating flood effects.
    - d. One suggestion was brought up for continuous or periodic monitoring of air pollutants within Strategy 1.1.
7. **Staff Reports**
- a. One staff report was provided about the launch of Engage R1. This online public engagement platform will be used to collect and analyze public feedback on a variety of active projects. Staff showed attendees the platform and highlighted its capabilities related to the Climate Action Plan.
8. **Agency Reports**
- a. Winnebago County Health Department discussed ongoing programs such as Healthy Homes. This initiative aspires to improve indoor air quality within the County. Additionally, WCHD is collaborating with the City of Rockford on addressing the barriers related to geothermal wells.



- b. Winnebago County Highway Department has applied for the PROTECT grant as well as a FEMA grant. Funding from the FEMA grant will go towards raising road that has flooded several times in the past years. Additionally, WCHD is in the process of applying for a grant to update a regional hazard-mitigation plan.
- c. Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District have several ongoing programs to help farmers about construction site best management practices. Additionally, the Spring Tree Sale is returning this year with the deadline set for March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- d. Natural Land Institute has updated their website to include climate change.
- e. Sustain Rockford has sponsored a Solar Expo to help increase solar usage within the Rockford Region. This expo is scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the Embassy Suites in Rockford.
- f. Eliminate Racism 815 has an upcoming event with the School District (RPS 205), Westgate Coalition, and the NAACP to discuss how to address existing gaps with black achievement and graduation rates within RPS205.
- g. Climate Reality Project and Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful are collaborating with Winnebago County Board Member Jaime Salgado to talk about the status of the Winnebago Landfill's lifespan.

9. **Other Business**

- a. No other business

10. **Adjournment**

- a. Meeting was adjourned at 5:18 pm

Meeting minutes prepared by: ATP

Minutes approved by action of the Forum:

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