



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Climate Resiliency Forum

Tuesday, January 23rd, 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 November 7, 2023
5. Presentation: Climate Action Plan - Goals and Strategies
6. Discussion: Climate Action Plan – Action Items
7. Staff Reports
8. Agency Reports
9. Other Business
10. Adjournment

Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact R1 Planning at 815-319-4180 at least two working days before the need for such services or accommodations.

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Climate Resiliency Forum

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

AGENDA

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm

2) Roll Call

Members Present: Collin Belle, City of Rockford Planning and Zoning; Neely Erickson, Illinois Realtors; Tim Bragg, Rockford Park District; Brad Roos, Sustain Rockford; Ann Wasser, Severson Dells; Mike Bacon, Climate Reality Project; Alan Branhagen, Natural Land Institute; Dennis Anthony, Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District; Amanda Mehl, Boone County Health Department; Todd Marshall, Winnebago County Health Department; Sean Von Bergen, Winnebago County Highway Department; Jeff Bailey, West Gate Coalition

Staff Present: Sydney Turner, Gabrielle Gamily, Austin Powell, Lauren Kleve, Juliana Charlebois-Berg, Eric Tison, Nathan Larsen, Seth Boswell

3) Public Comment

a) No public comment

4) Action Items

a) Approval of the Meeting Minutes of September 26th, 2023

i) Motion by Sustain Rockford, Seconded by Climate Reality Project, Minutes Approved

5) Presentation: Climate Resiliency Forum – SWOT Survey Results

a) R1 Staff gave a presentation on a prioritization survey which asked forum members to prioritize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for three categories in the region. These priorities include air quality & emissions, natural & working lands, and water.

6) Presentation: Update on the Planning Process

a) R1 Staff gave a presentation updating the creation of three core planning documents: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and the Climate Action Plan (CAP). Six workshops were held to further the creation of



these documents, with 107 attendees in total. Additionally, more than 20 community leaders who serve on the R1 Governing Board were also interviewed.

- b) The results of these workshops and interviews will be organized to create a regional assessment document for public use. R1 staff is currently drafting the narrative on sections that do not include additional research or public engagement.
- c) Severson Dells asked about the creation of a Land Use and Development Plan. Some topics of focus to this plan include increasing density as well as ensuring greenways are not impacted by new development. Additional considerations include the potential use of a development boundary to limit urban sprawl.
- d) Climate Reality Project asked about how R1 anticipates integrating all three documents together. R1 Staff reinforced the simultaneous creation of these documents will further its joint and further use.

7) Discussion: 2025 Climate Action Plan – Goals and Strategies

- a) A discussion was held on seven drafted strategies:
 - i) Improve the region’s air quality and reduce GHG emissions
 - ii) Provide strategic and climate-resilient development within the built environment
 - Discussion was held about whether or not equity would be included in this section, with R1 staff responding that equity will be included throughout all portions of the Climate Action Plan.
 - iii) Improve energy resilience by advancing clean energy and energy efficiency efforts
 - One comment was raised about changing the language of “educational initiatives” due to its overtly technical nature.
 - iv) Cultivate a conservation mindset to preserve, restore, and sustainably manage natural and working lands
 - One comment included adding “preserve” to Strategy 4.2
 - v) Promote sustainable waste management practices and technology
 - One question centered around the boundaries that would be considered for waste management. These boundaries will be limited to Boone and Winnebago Counties.
 - vi) Support water resource management
 - One attendee stressed the need for consistent monitoring programs, with Illinois Realtors stressing the need for funding to back this program.
 - vii) Support communities in preparing for the current and future effects of climate change
 - Attendees requested a definition on what a climate haven is. Discussion was then held about if the region is already experiencing these effects and to appropriately respond.



- b) Sustain Rockford asked about the process by which the goals and strategies were drafted. R1 staff responded this effort was done in-house through extensive research of completed climate action plans across the United States, academic research, staff expertise, and community member feedback.
- c) One attendee raised the need to link the narrative of the goals and strategies to national and international goals such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

8) Staff Reports

- a) No staff reports were provided.

9) Agency Reports

- a) Sustain Rockford held a meeting on 11/6 related to composting and food waste reduction. Further discussions will be held on encouraging food waste diversion from hospitals and other entities.
- b) Severson Dells will be holding a compost workshop in the first week of December. In addition, stormwater management education will be provided to elementary schools in Rockford.
- c) Natural Land Institute has a new executive director.
- d) Illinois Relators held a sustainability forum with Region 1 Planning Council and are looking to have a second event next year.

10) Other Business

- a) R1 Staff provided a list of proposed calendar dates for hosting the resiliency forum for 2024.

11) Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm

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

Climate Action Plan: Update

CLIMATE RESILIENCY FORUM | 1/23/2024

AN ENGINE FOR COLLABORATION
IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS



GOALS FOR TODAY

1. Update on the Climate Action Plan's progress.
2. Finalize the Climate Action Plan tactics under goals 1-4.
 - a. Opportunity for CRF to provide feedback on the tactics.
3. Discuss who will be responsible for the implementation of the tactics.
4. Go over the next steps in the process.



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

Drafted the first five chapters of the plan:

1. Introduction
2. About the Region
3. Trends & Impacts
4. Regional Assessment
5. Strategic Direction



CLIMATE RESILIENCY FORUM UPDATE

After the last Climate Resiliency Forum meeting in November, we asked for your feedback on the Climate Action Plan's goals and strategies. We received three responses.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE TACTICS

The tactics were developed using:

- Best practices from other Climate Action Plans
- Resources from the EPA and UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Alignment with our Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- An understanding and analysis of our region's needs
- Your feedback!



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

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

Strategy 1.2. Maintain and improve air quality.



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.

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

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



NEXT STEPS

- CRF to review the proposed tactics.
- Any feedback can be shared with Lauren Kleve or Gabi Gamily.
- Next meeting will cover the rest of the tactics and implementation under goals 5-7.



PROJECT CONTACT

Lauren Kleve,
Environmental Planner
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NEW ONLINE ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM: ENGAGE R1



Home Projects English My profile

Engage R1

Northern Illinois' space to share, discuss, and collaborate

Welcome! We are excited to introduce you to our new community engagement website. You may notice that it looks a little different and has new functions and features. Please be patient as we transition some of our active projects to this website. Thanks for taking part, joining us, and making your voice heard!
Multiple languages are available in the top navigation menu.

I'm looking for projects about [All categories](#) in [All places](#) or

engager1.mysocialpinpoint.com



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.
- Support local governments to develop carbon offset initiatives and programs.

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.

Strategy 4.1. Preserve and sustainably manage the natural environment.

- Prioritize the conservation and restoration of forests, wetlands, grasslands, and prairies 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 5.3. 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 and businesses in preparing for the 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.

Strategy 7.4. Support sustainable innovation and economic growth that promotes green business models.

- Provide technical assistance to local businesses and non-profits to encourage the development of green business models through education and outreach.
- Collaborate and consult with economic development organizations, businesses, and governments to support the Rockford Region becoming a green technology corridor.

- Cultivate public and private relationships to support affordable clean energy programs that offset emissions and reduce government operation costs.
- Explore the development of a local carbon offset program.

DRAFT



News Release

For Immediate Release

Date: Friday, December 8, 2023

Contact: Michael Dunn, Executive Director

Email: mdunn@r1planning.org | **Office:** 815-319-4180

Online Public Engagement Tool Expands R1's Reach

ROCKFORD, IL — R1 is launching Engage R1, an online engagement platform to conduct and analyze public feedback, to make public input more convenient and inclusive. The site provides information on all active projects underway at R1 and offers a variety of activities for individuals to participate in to share their input, ensuring R1 plans reflect the public's needs. This platform offers an additional way to reach the public and does not replace in-person outreach events.

Here's how it works. Once a project is launched, R1 will notify the public through the R1 website, social media, and press releases. Individuals can click on the link provided, which will connect to the Engage R1 home page. All current plans will be listed here; just click on the topic of choice, view information on the project, and complete engagement activities, if available. No registration or personal information is required to participate. Those who would like to follow specific projects can create an account to receive notifications when updates or additional opportunities for input are available.

This tool increases accessibility for the public so that time, transportation, physical ability, language, or any other barrier does not interfere with participation. It is accessible from any location, any time of day. It can be translated into eight languages most commonly spoken in the northern Illinois region: English, Arabic, Spanish, Croatian, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese.

Most importantly, the platform increases transparency between R1 and the public. Visitors can view all open, ongoing, and past projects; follow a timeline of key milestones in the planning process; and see real-time results of specific project feedback.

Engage R1 is now live at www.r1planning.org.

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

For more information, visit www.r1planning.org