



A Blueprint To a More Sustainable and Dynamic Rockford Region

ourmap
2010 - 2040 PLAN

“There’s a reason that Elm Street and Main Street resonate in our cultural memory. It’s not because we’re sentimental saps. It’s because this pattern of human ecology produced places that worked wonderfully well, and which people deeply loved.”
 - Jim Kunstler

01
 By minimizing congestion and increasing transit options, the Rockford region can generate greater savings for families and businesses.

Cities across the nation have begun a new era of smart growth/smart planning. Smart growth is an urban planning and transportation theory that concentrates growth in the center of a city and included the re-development of traditional neighborhoods (and, in fact, new development of traditional-style neighborhoods and discourages the continuation of urban sprawl). It advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, complete streets, and mixed-use development with an attractive range of housing choices.

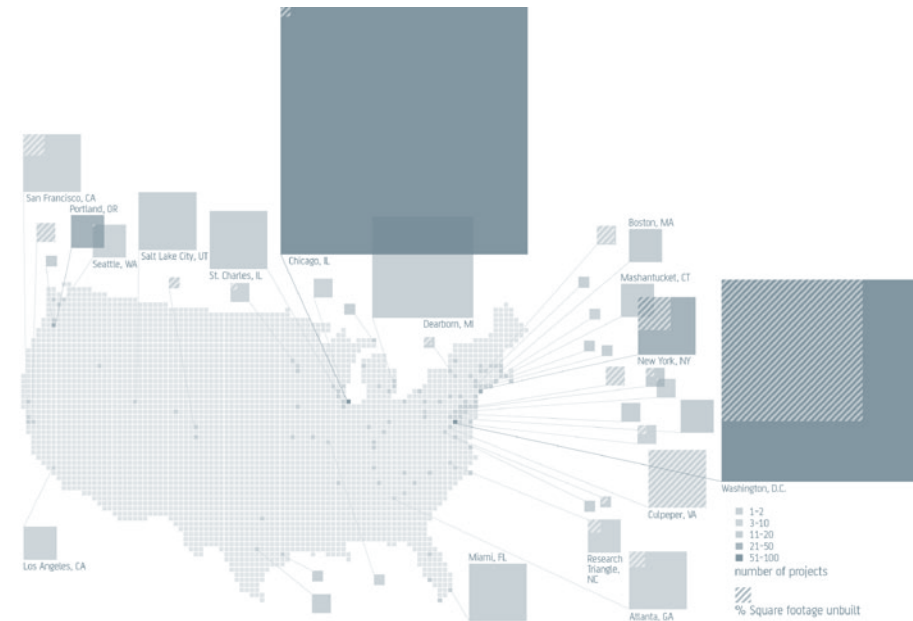
Smart growth values long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over a short-term focus. Its goals are to achieve a unique sense of community and place; expand the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources; increase citizens’ security and safety; and promote public health.

Smart growth/planning leads to savings on infrastructure as well as minimizing residents’ need of an automobile, which leads to less congestion and pressure to increase road capacity. By minimizing congestion and increasing transit options, the Rockford region can generate greater savings for families and businesses.

01
 Green Roofs have begun to gain traction throughout the country. Green roofs reduce heat islands, which are areas within a city that contain higher temperatures due to heat reflecting off buildings, roads and other man-made structures.

The illustration at right shows the amount of green roofs in selected American cities. The larger a square, the more vast a city’s green roof acreage is.

Graphic from “Charting Our Progress”, Metropolis Magazine, September, 2006.



02

Low-density sprawl requires increased resources – such as land, construction materials, energy and money to pay for the additional resources. Smart planning looks at preserving some of the more popular aspects of the American suburb while becoming less resource intensive.



03

American-styled design is being multiplied elsewhere as seen here in the master plan for the Dong-Hwa University in Taiwan. The basic principals of the American campus: proximity, walkability, mobility, affordability and spaces for relaxation, sport and study are also the leading tenets for smart growth.



04

Some infrastructure in the Rockford region is in poor repair and in need of re-investment.



05

Different cities take on different physical forms. Rockford is a unique city and will need to look at solutions that best suit it's urban form/structure.



From top left, clockwise: Paris, France; New York, NY; Copenhagen, Denmark; Toronto, Canada; and Rome, Italy.

02 One of the negative effects of sprawl is it necessitates a spiraling need for roads and other infrastructure to serve fewer residents in a given geographic space. Ultimately, sprawl is a road to social and economic nowhere.

03 Biking and walking save money on fuel and maintenance, and foster a healthier population.

The region shall promote the development of an integrated, multi-modal, metropolitan transportation system that facilitates the efficient, safe and economic movement of people and goods. Cornerstone objectives of the transportation system shall be right-sized and goal-driven to maximize effectiveness.

Investment should be based on desired outcomes that are derived from policy, and should be determined and funded according to quantifiable benefits. By taking a goal-driven approach, progress is measurable and governments are held accountable. Solutions should be implemented at the scale of the problem, and funding should be flexible to allow the investment to be scaled. Right-sizing also means that project scope and priority appropriate for major metropolitan areas are not necessarily the appropriate project scope and priority for the Rockford region. At the end of the day, our success will be defined by our ability and willingness to strategically prioritize our efforts, make courageous choices, motivate political will and engage and elicit the support and buy-in of our citizenry. It's about doing what is right for our region's future given the limitations of our resources.

Work to achieve state-of-good-repair of existing transportation assets.

The region has a wealth of physical infrastructure, and maintaining it is costly. Investments to achieve a state-of-good-repair of existing assets can extend the useful life of infrastructure and reduce life cycle costs. Fiscal impact analyses of new greenfield development can highlight the increased costs to taxpayers of sprawl.

Dramatic examples of failure to invest in infrastructure abound... The 2005 breach of New Orleans' levees during Hurricane Katrina, resulting in a civic catastrophe unlike any other in US history. The 2007 collapse of the I-35 bridge in Minneapolis, MN, in which vehicles plunged 81 feet into the Mississippi River and 13 motorists were killed.

Just as business strategically invest in their physical plants and infrastructure, governments must invest in transportation infrastructure, strategically and willfully. And we must recognize that one of the most negative effects of sprawl is that it necessitates a spiraling need for roads and other infrastructure to serve fewer residents in a given geographic space. Ultimately, sprawl is a road to social and economic nowhere.

Allow an uninhibited interchange between highways, rail, bicycle/ pedestrian, transit, air and other transportation facilities.

Biking and walking save money on fuel and maintenance, and foster a healthier population. Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly improvements include bike lanes on main streets, an urban bike-trail system, bike parking, pedestrian crossings, and associated master plans.

Modern freight facilities can replace legacy freight properties in the urban core which have become blighted and are an environmental liability. The legacy properties can become prime investment properties that can combine the interests of rail transportation, public transit and mixed-income, mixed-use redevelopment to create sustainable neighborhoods.

Existing transit systems can be integrated into the sustainable fabric of the region by providing more seamless connections, such as the simple addition of bike racks on busses. In the urban core transit routes can be modified to resemble urban circulators rather than point-to-point fixed-route service.

04 Complete streets ensure that transportation planners and engineers design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind – including bicyclists, public transit vehicles and riders, and pedestrians.

Spur innovation by using modern, urban-based best practices, such as complete streets, to maximize effectiveness of scarce public resources. Instituting a complete streets policy ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind – including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Ingredients that may be found on a complete street include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area.

Balance the needs of business, industrial and residential access with safety and congestion relief.

Many legacy arterial corridors have a functional classification and design level-of-service that is difficult to achieve because of access considerations of the adjacent land parcels. During peaks hours traffic flow problems in these corridors cause safety issues and recurring congestion. Access consolidation, or even access restriction, can lead to improved traffic operations and may also be of economic benefit. The opportunities should be explored in the context of a strategic regional arterial system.

Seek low-cost solutions to solve safety problems that can be implemented within existing public right-of-way.

In medium-sized urban areas many local safety problems are at intersections or short segments along a road. Easily implemented spot safety solutions, which can be as simple as new pavement striping or a change in traffic signal timing, can have a dramatic effect on safety. These low-cost solutions must be explored before more costly and disruptive major construction is considered. The IDOT Road Safety Audit can be used as a framework for developing these low-cost solutions.

Target transportation corridors where a high return on investment (ROI) can be demonstrated.

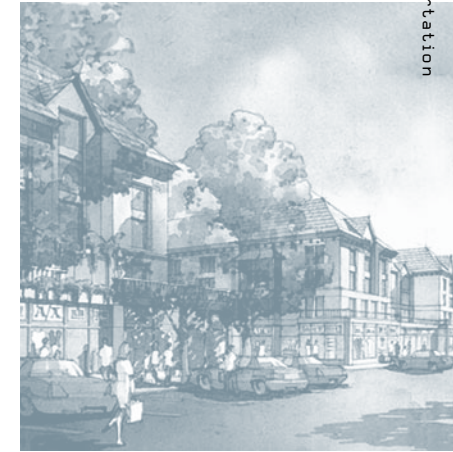
The 2040 Plan is designed to increase quality of life for all of our region’s citizens by looking closely at areas that are ripe for change of a transformational nature. For example, some high-traffic areas may not best be treated simply by expanding road capacity, but by increasing transit options and promoting alternative methods of travel. Whether it’s a high-growth area of the region where smarter and more diverse transit options can better guide new growth, or an inner-city neighborhood that’s ready for better land-use policies to increase the quality of life, the plan considers all options. Targeting transit corridors with high potential is smart policy, and will increase the quality of life for citizens of the region.

05 The 2040 Plan is designed to increase quality of life for all of our region’s citizens by looking closely at areas that are ripe for change.

06 + 07 Renderings of pedestrian friendly environments. The goal of such landscapes is to encourage residents to walk more, drive less and be a part of a lively, yet closely knit community.



08 The intersection of Auburn and Main is scheduled to be reconfigured into a roundabout in 2011. This dramatic change is calculated to breathe new life into the neighborhood and help stimulate economic redevelopment into this once-thriving near-west side business district.



09 + 10 Atlanta has for many years been the poster-child for sprawl and lack of planning. Recently, the city has taken on an ambitious project that will activate a thinly used rail line for public use. The Beltline will include 22 miles of Light Rail which will loop the entire city of Atlanta. The line is expected to carry many thousands of commuters per year, and give citizens across the region new transit options while relieving highway congestion. While the beltline isn’t scheduled for completion for another 25 years, four new parks and 9 miles of trails have already been completed within the masterplan specifications.



11 Changes in land use and investments in improved transit and transportation options can improve the efficiency and quality of travel, reduce trip lengths, and reduce GHG emissions. The 2040 Plan recognizes the significant role that transit must play in the future of the Rockford region, and provides for incentives to reduce single-occupancy passenger vehicle travel.



06 The 2040 Plan encourages the creation of compact, walkable, and bike- and transit-friendly hubs.

07 The result will be urban environments that encourage people to live healthier, more socially active lifestyles.

12 Bicycle commuting generates benefits for both the commuter and the community in the forms of better health, a cleaner environment, reduced traffic congestion, economic savings for all and improved quality of life. Bikeable communities create a more equitable society by providing transit options for all citizens.



08 Parks and greenspace create gathering places for our residents. They purify the air, provide places to play and relax, and give citizens more reasons to be proud of their communities.

13 Sinnissippi Park is a product of making our cities more livable places. The 2040 Plan reflects the belief that preserving our open spaces is key to developing healthier and more livable communities.



14 Open space preservation supports smart growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our community's quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities. Parks, forest preserves and other open space areas are often the cheapest way to safeguard drinking water, clean the air and achieve other environment goals.



2

The region shall seek a coordinated growth strategy that enhances livability of neighborhoods, balances development pressure with infill development, promotes the agriculture economy, reduces green house gas emissions, introduces walkable landscapes, conserves natural resources and rejuvenates historical economic centers.

Compact, safe and vibrant urban neighborhoods attract people and business. Creating such neighborhoods is a critical element of reducing urban sprawl and protecting our citizens' air quality, safety and general quality of life. In the spirit of infill, success might include redevelopment strategies and zoning policies that channel housing and job growth into urban centers and neighborhood business districts. The goal is to create compact, walkable, and bike- and transit-friendly hubs. This sometimes requires local governmental bodies to implement code changes that allow increased height and density downtown and regulations that not only eliminate minimum parking requirements for new development but establish a maximum number of allowed parking spaces. The result will be urban environments that actually encourage people to live healthier, more socially active lifestyles. It is undeniably true that one is more likely to meet one's neighbors passing them walking on a sidewalk than in a car.

In the 1800's, England recognized the importance of a healthy environment within the confines of the city and began numerous parkland projects. At the time, cities were being choked by unhealthy smoke, a byproduct of one of the greatest economic upheavals in history, the Industrial Revolution. Within short time, the US also began it's own green movements which led to great parks such as Central Park in New York, Grant Park in Chicago and Sinnissippi Park & Gardens in Rockford. This thinking is still of great importance as parks and greenspace create gathering places for our residents. These spaces help purify the air, provide places to play and relax and instill in citizens more pride in their communities. The 2040 Plan looks forward to continuing these great traditions so that people can live happier, healthier lives.

Maximize open space by utilizing existing building stock and concentrating development in mixed-use, mixed-income developments of moderate to high density.

The most widely used tool for achieving smart growth is the local zoning law. Through zoning, new development can be restricted to specific areas, and additional density incentives can be offered for brownfield and greyfield land. Zoning can also reduce the minimum amount of parking required to be built with new development, and can be used to require set-asides for parks and other community amenities.

The result of such policy initiatives can be more open space outside (and even inside) urban areas, cleaner air, less congestion, less stressful lifestyles and a generally more desirable community. By making such quality of living changes, we actually make our community more attractive to business.

Advocate with regional partners to redirect greenfield fringe growth, to traditional urban core neighborhoods.

The 2040 Plan recommends that much of the region's growth occur as "reinvestment," in areas within existing communities across the region that are already served by infrastructure. The Plan also suggests that some development in currently undeveloped areas will be necessary to support expected growth.

09 Moderately dense development that focuses on reinvestment can have significant positive impacts in lowering the costs of infrastructure.

Increasing the livability of our communities is critically important to the plan's goals. Moderately dense development that focuses on reinvestment can have significant positive impacts in lowering the costs of infrastructure, reducing congestion and supporting alternative transportation modes, improving housing affordability, and minimizing environmental impacts. Supportive land use is also critically important to support the expansion of public transit, another of the plan's key recommendations.

Reduce the effects of sprawl by prioritizing transportation investments where partnerships exist to rehabilitate blighted and distressed areas.

The plan will focus on strategies to help local governments overcome challenges and pursue opportunities for redevelopment. One important element is the economic and financial feasibility of redevelopment projects. The public sector cannot create a market for redevelopment where none exists, but it can invest in infrastructure that makes redevelopment projects more viable. In particular, transit improvements are critical for supporting growth and can be a catalyst for redevelopment. The viability of development in these places can also be increased by, for example, remediating brownfields, reconsidering parking policies and requirements, reusing existing building stock where possible, and locating public buildings in areas where redevelopment is sought. Location of schools has been found to be especially important to livable communities and deserves particular attention in long-range planning.

Package incentives to promote regional growth objectives; Utilize newly signed regional compact agreement in conjunction with CEDS to prioritize incentives.

The region has recently come together to approve a new Regional Collaboration Policy. This initiative formalizes what we already do well in the region – collaborate to win jobs. Collaboration among cities, villages and counties is crucial to success. The region does not move forward when development opportunities pit one city or village against each other. Regional collaboration is the key to sustainable success, economic recovery and job creation. The CEDS can be used to prioritize incentive packages because the metrics have already been calculated and vetted through a regional process.

10 Regional collaboration is the key to sustainable success, economic recovery and job creation.

Engage non-traditional agricultural partners and prioritize green economic development.

The plan will also treat our farmland and food supply as an important natural resource, emphasizing local food production and access to fresh food as a means to reduce energy consumption, improve health and the natural environment, support the agricultural economy, and increase a sense of community. Local food systems can be strengthened by local actions as well as broader regional or state policy, and the plan will identify actions at a variety of levels that support local food systems.

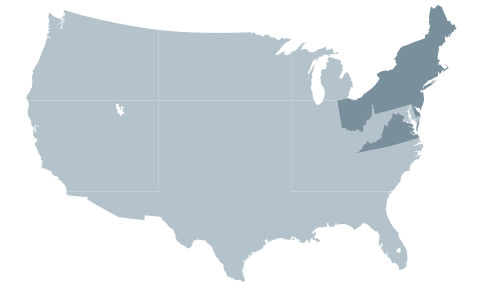
Resource conservation will help to reduce the region's greenhouse gas emissions, but it is only part of the solution. Cleaner energy sources are needed to power our buildings, and cleaner fuels and more efficient vehicles must be part of the solution to reduce emissions from the transportation sector. While these issues are addressed at a larger scale than the region, the plan will support efforts to develop cleaner energy sources or use technological advancements to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and make our region safer, cleaner and more independent.

11 The 2040 Plan will treat farmland and food supply as important natural resource, emphasizing local food production and access to fresh food.

15 + 16 Brownfield programs promote the cleanup and reuse of sites by working directly with communities, states, and local governments to identify and remove barriers to redevelopment.



17 Map of U.S. By 2050, sprawl will pave over enough rural land to fill up the states of Ohio, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine.



18 + 19 Downtown Rockford goes back to the future in 2010 with the return of Rockford City Market Fridays, 3PM - 7PM, a farmer's market with a twist. Shopping for farm-fresh, locally-sourced vegetables, herbs, and meats will be enhanced with entertainment for citizens of all ages.



20 The Rockford region is blessed to have local governments and communities in Boone and Winnebago County partner together to create wealth, grow jobs, implement transportation projects, plan for efficient use of groundwater, and manage stormwater in a regional manner. The Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (NICTI), the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the Tri-State Alliance and the Regional Compact agreement are prime examples of the cooperative spirit at both the planning and implementation level.



21

Rooftop gardens have become more popular in the U.S. as ways to mitigate heat islands and improve the life of residents



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Greenspace provides sanctuary for wildlife, plants and people alike.

23

Portland, Oregon's urban growth boundary clearly defines the point beyond which the city cannot expand. It allows the region to better coordinate regional growth while preserving land and fostering healthy local agribusiness.



24

Arts and culture-related industries, also known as "creative industries," provide direct economic benefits to states and communities; they create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. Because they enhance quality of life, the arts and culture are important complements to community development. They enrich local amenities and attract young professionals to an area.



25

In San Francisco, residents have turned numerous empty properties into community gardens. The gardens improve the aesthetics of the abandoned lots and they help bring citizens together.



26

A Logo from a community event in New York City. Cities large and small are making strong pitches to local governments for expanded open spaces.



3

The region shall focus and prioritize transportation investments that promote financial and environmental sustainability, fosters a healthy business climate that encourages private sector partnerships, spurs economic competitiveness and creates jobs, utilizes the strengths of an exceptional local labor pool, develops world-class neighborhoods and maximizes the quality of life for the citizens of the region.

Private sector partnerships are a new concept in transportation, and legislative changes are necessary to modify the culture of infrastructure development. Additionally the public-private partnership model has included organized labor, and the region is blessed with a strong, talented and diverse labor pool that can add considerable value to 3P projects. Traditionally, transportation projects have only engaged the private sector in the construction aspects of projects, and to some extent design and maintenance of projects. The 2040 Plan supports the idea of engaging the private sector in the areas of operations, maintenance and finance. Design, Build, Operate, Maintain and Finance summarize the possibilities. Additionally the recent success of design-build contracts during disaster events illustrates the promise of the 3P process. This is especially true of passenger rail and the promise of a true high-speed rail network in the country.

12
The 2040 Plan supports the idea of engaging the private sector in the areas of operations, maintenance and finance.

Market the region as a competitive force in the field of green industry, utilize the robust labor shed, and distinguish the region as forward-thinking, eco-friendly and solution-driven.

The 2040 Plan recommends strengthening the region's green infrastructure, ranging from large open space areas to small-scale green stormwater management practices, to benefit our natural environment, improve biodiversity, and support ecosystem function. Green infrastructure also improves the health of our residents, and the region's overall economy, and public support for additional regional and local open space has been shown to be strong. Prioritization is no less important for this type of infrastructure, and the plan will recommend that acquisition and restoration activities be targeted in the most sensitive or valuable environmental lands to preserve biodiversity, increase the supply of parks and open space in parts of the region that have shortages of these features, and provide important connections between open space areas. This approach also highlights the value of open space for storm water management and considers waterways to be part of the green infrastructure system.

13
Green infrastructure improves the health of our residents, and the region's overall economy.

Embrace the environmental work of the regional partners and develop strategies through a regional lens that promotes sustainability.

Many local environmental initiatives are underway, including the US Conference of Mayors Cool Cities program, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program, the EPA-HUD-USDOT Sustainable Communities Partnership, the Greater RMAP Environmental Education Network (GREEN), the Winnebago County Green Business Network and many others. The 2040 Plan supports continuation and integration of these efforts and recommends the allocation of MPO staff resources to these efforts.

Develop regional consensus on water resource and stormwater management issues.

The region is faced with serious long-term impacts from a lack of regional plans for both groundwater resources and the management of stormwater. The 2040 Plan recommends activation of MPO-based efforts

of the Technical Committee to address these issues. The soon to be released Stormwater Master Management Plan for the City of Rockford can serve as the foundation for the regional analyses, combining the efforts of groups like WINAQUA, the Boone County Stormwater Management Committee and the Northern Regional Groundwater Protection Planning Committee. It is also critical that regional efforts on water resources be coordinated with the NE Illinois plan developed by CMAP and other NE Illinois-specific agencies.

Seek opportunities for transit-oriented-development especially in conjunction with passenger rail stations.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is seen as an increasingly desirable choice for many residents and businesses. Typically characterized by higher development density, TOD offers planning agencies, cities, and counties opportunities for sustainable development options to counteract some of the deleterious effects of urban sprawl, declining urban cores, and possibly congestion sparked by rising populations.

The ability to capitalize on the excitement and momentum of passenger rail in the region can not be over-stated. Moreover, the symbiotic relationship of rail station development, TOD, affordable housing, poverty remediation, removal of blight and the slow reversal of urban poverty make these efforts particularly attractive for the region and can demonstrate the highest return on investment of any transportation/land-use combination project.

Advocate for changes in tax policy that move the region forward towards long-term sustainability.

Any recommendations for improvement or expansion of the transportation system will require reconsideration of existing resource distribution or additional funding beyond what is now available. Due to the scale of regional needs and the difficulty of increasing taxes, we will need innovative ways of financing transportation improvements beyond the federal and state gas tax and other conventional sources, although these sources will remain important. Options being explored include "value capture" strategies as part of new transit service extensions, public-private partnerships, and sales tax authority for the Rockford Mass Transit District that could replace the need to use property taxes and allow commuter rail development.

It is also crucial that state and federal governmental agencies restructure programs to move away from rigid, silo-based formula programs in favor of regional block grant style flexible programs. This will allow regions to use their funds to address needs that have been prioritized by a transparent local process and have demonstrated significant return on investment.

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Transit-oriented development (TOD) offers planning agencies, cities, and counties opportunities for sustainable development options to counteract some of the harmful effects of urban sprawl.

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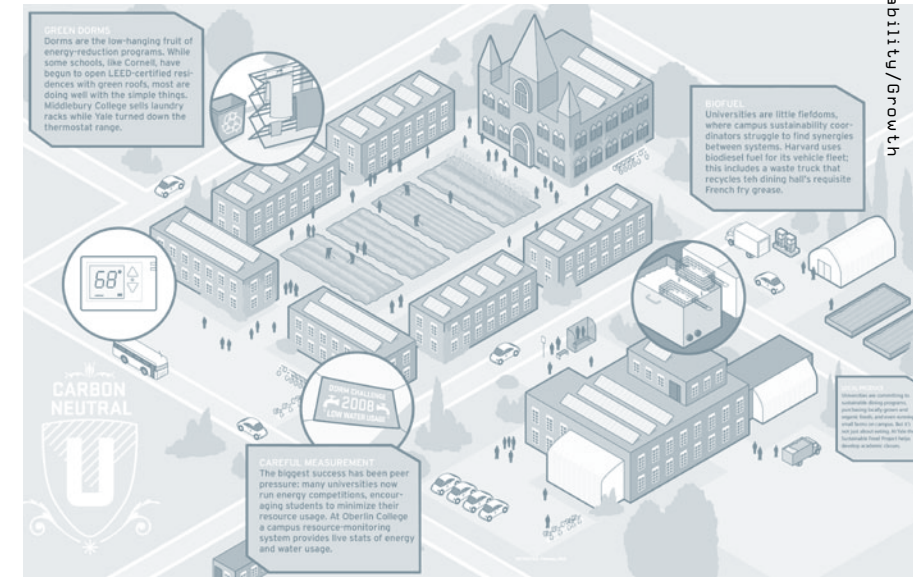
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In 2005, Yale University enacted a program to cut carbon emissions by 43% by 2020. The program, which was spearheaded by the economist Richard Levin, is an example of what a comprehensive plan can do to reduce dependency of fossil fuels, while saving resources and money.

By 2009, in four short years, the university had already cut carbon emissions by 38%.

Graphic from "Carbon Neutral U", Metropolis Magazine, February, 2008.

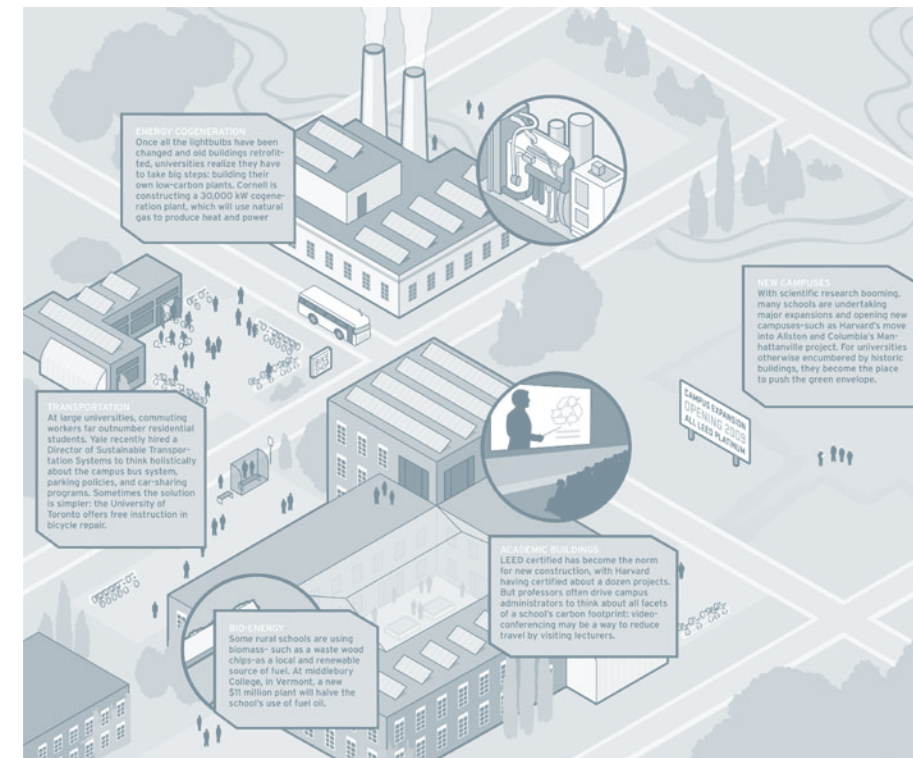


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Yale's plan is a multi-faceted approach to make the campus (and city) a more livable community.

Yale's home city of New Haven, has a population of 124,000, smaller than the City of Rockford. While New Haven has experienced many of the same problems as Rockford – disinvestment, manufacturing and jobs decline, underperforming schools, urban blight – it positioned itself for the future through an aggressive campaign that centers around smart growth and connectivity to the surrounding region via rail.

Graphic from "Carbon Neutral U", Metropolis Magazine, February, 2008.



29

Textile maker Tas-Ka, weaves a city scene that includes a rich tapestry of housing varieties near important community buildings, such as schools and churches. It's interesting to note that in this textile, the structures and trees sprout out from other buildings, creating a sense of a tight-knit community.



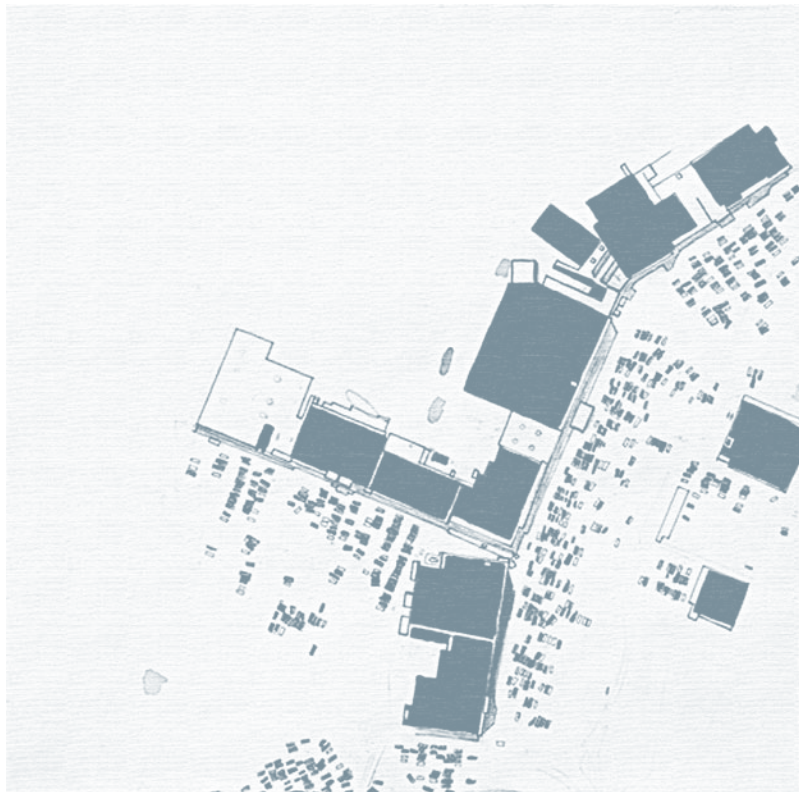
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The Rockford region has identified commuter transportation to connect to Chicagoland as the top regional priority. Commuter rail provides direct connections to the urban centers, serves the needs of low-income, minority and transportation-disadvantaged persons and maximizes the societal benefits inherent in transportation investments.



31

Drawings by Soandso, which showcase the spatial qualities inherent in our urban environments. Soandso looks at the spaces in which certain activities take place. By doing so, these simplified drawings give an easy-to-read picture of how space intensive our environments are.



4

The regional planning framework shall integrate the disparate activities of transportation, land use, education, housing, economic development, human capital development, and human services to amplify the incremental value associated with coordinated planning.

The region has difficult decisions to make, and the need for action is clearly immediate. Many of today's challenges are the result of policy decisions made — or deferred — in past decades. Yet the benefits of effective planning can actually emerge quite rapidly when the will to implement those plans is strong.

16
Many of today's challenges are the result of policy decisions made — or deferred — in past decades.

As a region, we must seize this moment and be prepared to link the region's long-range comprehensive plan to transportation, land use, the natural environment, economic prosperity, job creation, housing, community development, human services/human capital, education and workforce investments. The Metropolitan Planning Organization is in the best position to lead and convene these once-disparate activities into a regional vision. It has qualified, trained people and the experience to lead and make change.

RMAP to involve resource agencies from a wide variety of disciplines and boldly plan for comprehensive solutions that go beyond traditional transportation planning.

The willingness of federal and state resource agencies to consult and participate in long-range planning is now a reality. In most cases, the resource agencies can provide plans, maps and databases, often in GIS-ready format. The plan recommends engaging the US Army Corps of Engineers for mapping of wetland mitigation areas and banks; US Fish and Wildlife for endangered species lists, habitat and compliance with the Endangered Species Act; the US Environmental Protection Agency / IL EPA for watershed assessment & tracking plus an "Envirofacts" data warehouse for air, water, land and NEPA compliance; the IL Department of Natural Resources for statewide conservation plans; the IL Historic Preservation Agency for the HAARGIS system of information on historic properties and structures; the IL Department of Agriculture for compliance with the Farmland Preservation Act, soils information on a county by county basis and land use planning assistance to ensure compact and contiguous development in urban areas, minimizing the conversion of ag land to non-ag use; and the regional Soil & Water Conservation Districts. The complexity of making change of the nature recommended in the Plan is truly quite daunting. But, it can be managed when all participants are willing. And they appear to be more willing now than any time in recent memory.

17
The plan recommends engaging multiple groups and organizations to ensure compact and contiguous urban development, while preserving our region's precious resources.

Affordable housing partnerships with Rockford and Winnebago County housing authorities.

Housing is a critical part of the region's infrastructure and the approach of the plan is to pursue a balanced supply of housing distributed throughout the region, ensuring that each household has access to the region's assets. A balanced housing supply that provides options positively affects many measures of quality of life, allowing people to live closer to work and improving choices for lower-income groups, older residents and young households. It is especially important to provide opportunities for affordability in places with transit service as part of transit oriented development projects, and the plan recommends the use of housing + transportation (H+T) index as the measure of true affordability. Addressing housing and transportation costs together

18
A balanced housing supply will positively affect many measures of quality of life, allowing people to live closer to work and improving choices for lower-income groups, older residents and young households.

highlights the increased transportation costs that households face in lower-density, auto-dependent areas, even if housing costs in those areas are inexpensive. This can be calculated through the “H+T index,” a measure developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT).

19 The majority of the region’s affordable housing is created by the private sector, and this is expected to continue. A key strategy for creating an adequate and regionally balanced supply of affordable housing is for local governments to support and permit its construction.

In reality, the majority of the region’s affordable housing is created by the private sector, and this is expected to continue. A key strategy for creating an adequate and regionally balanced supply of affordable housing is for local governments to support and permit its construction. Affordability and balance are broad concepts, and there will be varying ways that local governments define these terms to meet local needs. Similarly, there are a variety of housing policy options that work best when targeted to specific situations, rather than broadly applied. For example, housing preservation, inclusionary zoning, or removal of regulatory barriers are solutions that may be appropriate in different parts of the region. In addition to supporting affordable housing provided through the private market, the plan will support appropriate roles for other supplemental public programs.

Work with RAEDC, Growth Dimensions, RLDC, Mobility Subcommittee, RRDp and others to seek opportunities to integrate housing and workforce development, education and human capital development with traditional MPO work products on transportation and land use.

The 2040 Plan proposes to take a look at the various long-range efforts to see where true integration is possible. Reform will take time and the region will move a new vision incrementally. Many of the regional policy and technical groups have a single, or narrowly focused, mission because of the funding silo that initiated their creation. The goal is to look at opportunities to break down the silos and intertwine the planning efforts seamlessly into a strategic, integrated region vision.

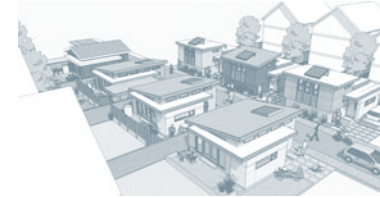
Integrate education at all levels into a regional context.

Some of the greatest challenges facing the region are related to public education and its impact on the community. Truancy rates must be lowered and minority achievement gaps need to be closed. Standardized test scores and graduation rates are unacceptably low. High poverty levels have a damaging effect on learning and social development. Too many of our children are unprepared for a successful life in an increasingly competitive world. Our social and economic vitality depends upon accelerated achievement in public education, but the turnaround of public schools cannot be accomplished by the school district and teachers alone.

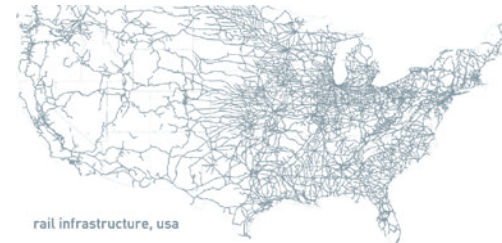
The goal is to engage a broad base of public and private organizations in a cooperative and focused effort to support the needs of Rockford’s youth. The result will be a positive impact on public school achievement, the well-being of our children, and the economic and social advancement of our community. The strategy envisions all students graduating from high school with marketable employment skills or enrolling in post-secondary education. They are eager to live, work, learn, create, and play in the region as contributing adults. The mission is to align community resources in support of public education strategies to raise student achievement, improve the health and happiness of our children, and advance the economic and social well-being of our community. When public education is truly integrated into the fabric of the community, and are aligned with other community goals, the results can start to happen.

20 The mission is to align community resources in support of public education strategies to raise student achievement, improve the health and happiness of our children, and advance the economic and social well-being of our community.

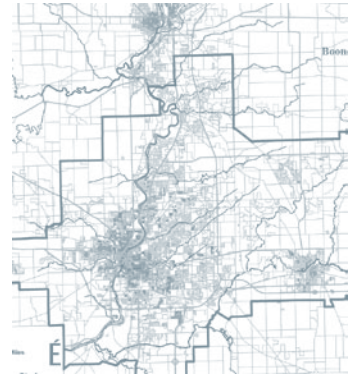
32 Reframing nationally accepted affordability measures to combine both housing and transportation costs could allow low-income households to more easily qualify for homeownership, provide a substantial incentive to the private sector to invest in transit-oriented locations, and support the public sector in making investments that lower household transportation costs.



33 The Midwest is transit rich. The Rockford region would be greatly served by utilizing existing rail lines to begin to build a regional rail system. Benefits include expanding economic opportunity and increasing mobility options for all residents.

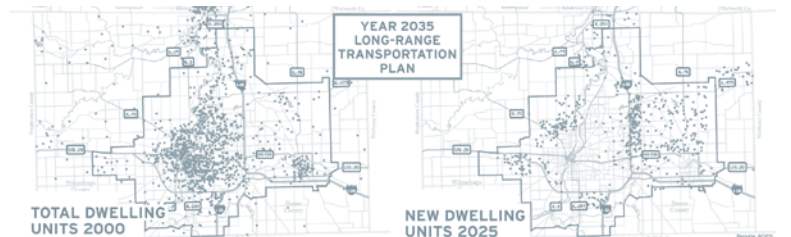
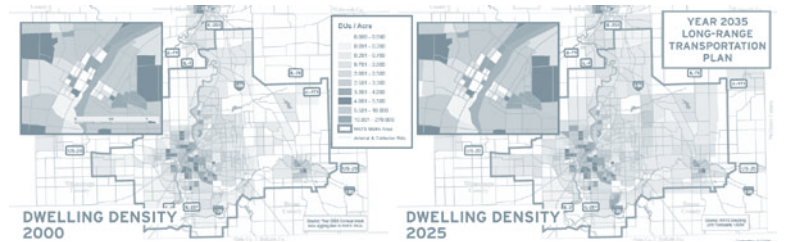


rail infrastructure, usa



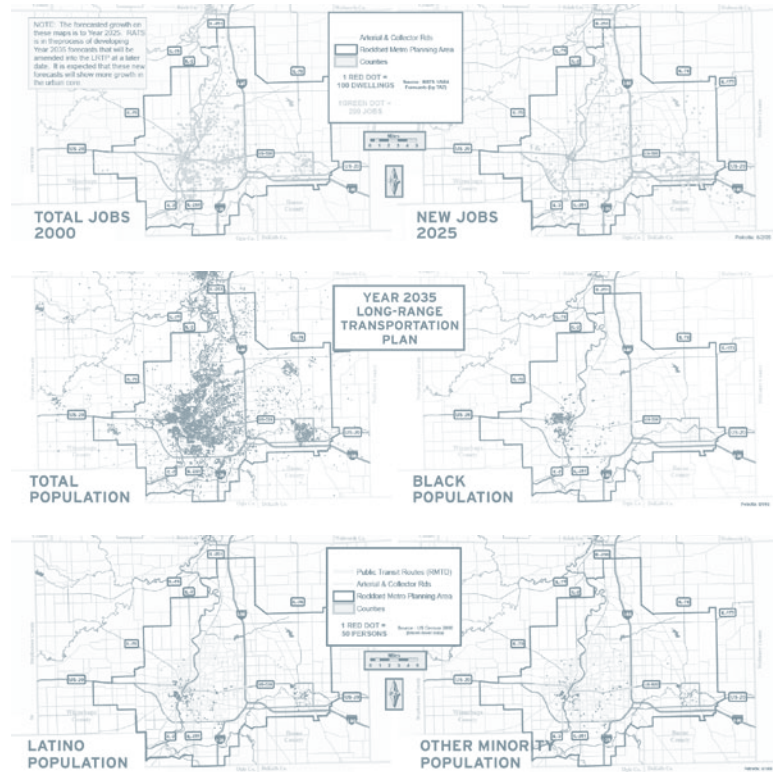
34 The density map on the far right showcases a sprawling region. The 2040 Plan is seeking to place development attention on infill and moderately dense developments so our region can preserve its open spaces, while keeping our produce local and fresh.

35-39 These mapping projects show a region that is suffering from uneven growth. While infrastructure and potential exist in inner city locations, development continues to push the city limits outward in ways that exasperate traffic problems and hamper quality of life.



Worse yet, many of the new jobs that will be created in the next 15 years will be in areas not accessible via public transportation, leaving many residents in our region with limited access to high-growth job centers.

The 2040 Plan promotes sensible, efficient growth for the Rockford region. By advocating smart growth policies, our region can escape many of the mistakes we've made in the past. RMAP is interested in a cleaner, more equitable region for all our citizens.



21 The 2040 Plan will call for real-time sharing of data by public agencies with each other as well as other organizations and residents, improving efficiency of many public services.

22 The ability of the region to remain economically viable depends on our collective capacity to address infrastructure, social and environmental issues in unison, not one at the expense of the other.

23 Understanding existing assets, where potential areas of improvement lie, and the geographic breakdown by neighborhood helps empower the public and private sector to better address the community's social, environmental, and economic needs.

5

The region shall develop metrics that provide transparent reporting and analysis of community health indicators framed around equity and environmental justice.

Across the region, an enormous number of federal, state, regional, and local agencies currently collect administrative data for their own use. The plan will call for real-time sharing of this data by public agencies with each other, as well as other organizations and residents, which will improve efficiency for a variety of public services. Such increased transparency of data and improved intergovernmental data sharing is an important factor in the success of the project, known locally as the Vital Signs project.

The Vital Signs project is proposed to be a public-private partnership measuring regional sustainability. The ability of the region to remain economically viable depends on our collective capacity to address infrastructure, social and environmental issues in unison, not one at the expense of the other, with a backdrop of the current economic challenges facing the region. Measuring the region's sustainability is a crucial first step to competitively attract and retain quality jobs and to establish sustainability goals and priorities, which will quickly lead to a sustainability plan modeled after the federal Sustainability Partnership of HUD-EPA-DOT.

The project will pull data together into a repository and be an on-going publically-accessible resource to find and understand indicators directly affecting the ability of the region to create and retain quality jobs. They key component no other sustainability indicators project is yet incorporating in North America is to normalize the data by community wealth. Based on the Boston Indicators Project model, the 2040 Plan proposes to measure 12 key metrics. Understanding what assets exist, where potential areas of improvement lie, and the geographic breakdown by neighborhood empowers the public and private sector to better address the community's social, environmental, and economic needs. Thus allowing the regional partners to make more strategic decisions in the economic development quest to be a more sustainable region.

Seed funding will go to build the digital tracking system for the Vital Sign metrics, the online repository, a publicly accessible map, and the engagement programs and activities needed to initially engage the community in the collection process.

Federal and state investment reform that is goal-driven and sized appropriately for our region.

Coordinated investment should serve as a sustainable "roadmap" for the region's future and help guide investment decisions at the federal, state, and local levels. This requires an examination of how to improve the ways in which investment decisions are currently made. Many of our most pressing problems cannot be solved solely by the individual actions of any level of government. These issues truly "spill over" across jurisdictional borders, and their solutions demand coordinated investment by all levels of government.

Best practices.

Illustrative case studies demonstrate the kinds of opportunities federal investment should encourage and replicate, but too often misses out on. There is an historic opening for public and private sector partners at the local and national level to define a new framework for federal investment

informed by these innovative models, supplemented by research, critical analysis, and public input. Goal-driven, right-sized, coordinated innovation in a shared pursuit of economic viability, social equity, and environmental sustainability is the only ticket to true, lasting recovery.

The disconnects and inefficiencies in federal investment often are mirrored by states and local units of government – they match federal funds, use similar definitions and goals, and funnel funding through issue-specific agencies. States are too often restricted by these issue-specific, formulaic mandates, and attempt to achieve fairness by spreading resources far and wide, but fail to account for actual need or the cost versus benefits of these investments. Meanwhile, mayors and municipal leaders need to keep their communities functioning, often without sufficient resources. The state and federal support they do receive is indispensable, but frequently comes with strings attached that are not flexible enough to truly address the root causes of the challenges they face. The result is counterproductive competition, instead of cooperation, between municipalities. Case studies and best practices can serve the region to move forward towards lasting economic recovery.

Analytics of the true cost of development to municipal and county governments.

Fiscal impact analyses can be used to estimate the impact of a development or a land use change on the costs and revenues of governmental units serving the development. The analysis is generally based on the fiscal characteristics of the community— e.g., revenues, expenditures, land values—and characteristics of the development or land use change—e.g., type of land use, distance from central facilities. The analysis enables local governments to estimate the difference between the costs of providing services to a new development and the revenues—taxes and user fees, for example—that will be generated by the development.

There are two basic approaches to assess the cost of services that development imposes on a local government—average costing and marginal costing. Average costing is the simpler more common procedure. It attributes costs to new development according to average cost per unit of service in existing development times the number of units the growth is estimated to create or the demand for that unit. It does not take into account excess or deficient capacity to deliver services, and it assumes that average costs of municipal services will remain stable in the future. Alternatively, marginal costing relies on analysis of the demand and supply relationships for public services. This procedure recognizes that excess and deficient capacity exists in communities. It views growth not in a linear manner, but as a more cyclical process in terms of the impact on expenditures. The 2040 Plan proposes that a balance between the two methods be explored.

The distinction between average and marginal costing is fundamental to fiscal impact analysis. Marginal and average costing approaches may result in dramatically different estimates of fiscal impacts for the same development. This is due to the “lumpy” nature of certain public services, like sewage treatment plants and water supply systems. When such facilities are built in a community, they are typically financed with long-term debt and built with the expectation that they will also serve future population growth in the community. Therefore, the incremental

cost of providing the service to one more resident is low. However, these facilities do have a threshold level where surplus capacity is eventually depleted. It is at this point that the new development or new growth requires new infrastructure investment and the marginal cost of serving a new resident may actually be higher than the average cost. The marginal cost approach focuses on defining a community’s marginal response to a new development or land use change through careful attention to existing demand and supply relationships in a community.

24
Fiscal impact analysis enables local governments to estimate the difference between the costs of providing services to a new development and the revenues—taxes and user fees, for example—that will be generated by the development.

25
There is a point at which new development or new growth requires additional infrastructure investment that cannot be supported by existing community resources. Generally this decision point favors infill development over new growth.

40
It is widely held that new development should pay for itself and not burden existing taxpayers with the provision of infrastructure and public services to serve new residents and businesses. Thus, it is imperative to set standards for understanding the true cost of development of all publicly supported projects.

41
Comprehensive land-use plans take into account many different factors. This plan maps out residential, office, recreational and other environmental concerns, such as migratory bird patterns. The aim is to achieve a city that fosters healthy and efficient living, while lessening the impact built environments have on natural environments.

42
Mounting evidence suggests that physical and mental health problems correlate to poorly planned and built environments. Similarly, sedentary lifestyles have negative social, health and economic consequences. Good planning can enable, not inhibit, healthy lifestyles for all residents.



**A Blueprint To a More
Sustainable and Dynamic
Rockford Region**

RELATED TO THE:

2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
in the ROCKFORD METROPOLITAN AREA

AS PREPARED BY:

Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP)
the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
for the Rockford region – April 14, 2010

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- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Illinois Department of Transportation

The contents, views, policies and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the above agencies.

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