

2 0 **TRANSPORTATION 4 TOMORROW** 0

A Long Range Transportation Plan for the Rockford Region

Transportation Planning Matters to You

Everyday our region's 349,431 residents depend on the transportation system to get them to school, work, the store, recreation and entertainment, health care, and home again. A well functioning system is vital for emergency response, including police, fire, and EMS services. This same system also moves goods and freight through the region, fueling our economy. By 2040 our region is projected to be home to over 419,000 residents, all of whom will depend on the transportation system to get around.

The transportation system is made up of an **interconnected network** of roadways and bridges, public transit, railways, airports, and bike and pedestrian accommodations such as sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes.

Generally speaking, the American Planning Association describes that the purpose of planning is to "improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations."

Transportation Planning:

- Ensures that every element of the transportation network is operating **safely, reliably, and efficiently.**
- **Strengthens local communities.**
- **Enhances regional economic resiliency.**
- **Maintains existing services** while **anticipating future needs.**
- Seeks to **prevent or mitigate any negative impacts** which may be attributed to the transportation system, including air and water pollution, urban sprawl, and increased household expenses.
- Builds a system that supports transportation choice, **ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, physical limitation or income has equal access and ability** to move freely throughout the region.
- All of this must be accomplished while **balancing increasing costs with limited funding availability.**

The following guide is designed to give you an overview of the transportation planning process in the Rockford region, who to contact, and how you can get involved to shape the future of the region's transportation system.

The Five Core Functions of an MPO

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were first formed by the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act to carry out the comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) transportation planning process.

According to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) MPOs have the following 5 core functions:

- Establish a fair and impartial setting for regional decision making
- Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options
- Prepare and maintain a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Involve the public in all of the above mentioned functions

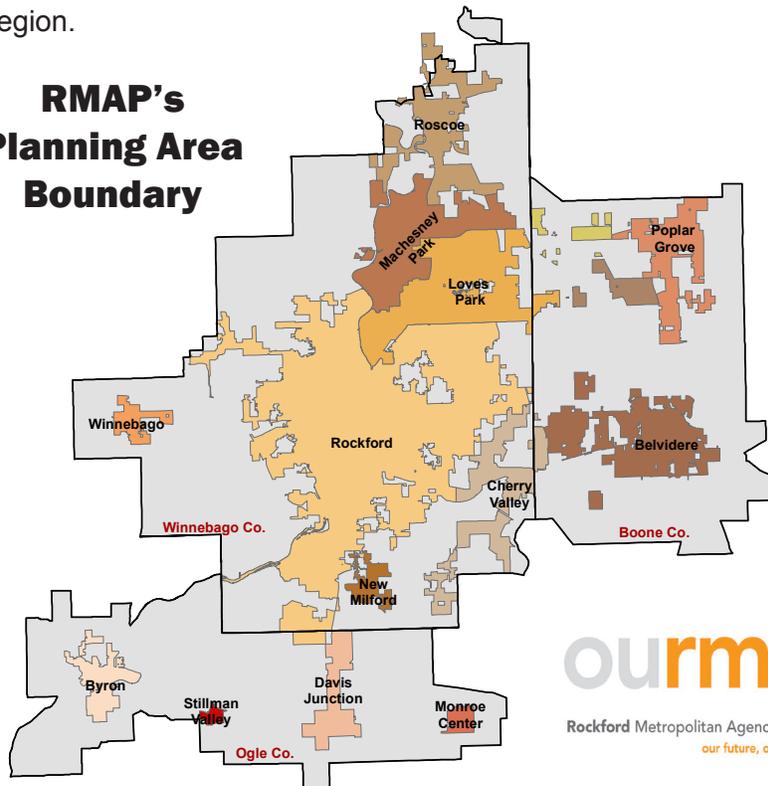
Several federal surface transportation acts have been passed since MPOs were first created. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) signed in July of 2012 is the most current federal legislation guiding MPO functions.

Who is the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning?

The Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning, more simply known as RMAP, is an organization of officials, planners, engineers and citizens that meet on an ongoing basis to focus on transportation needs, and formulate plans and programs to address these needs for the region. RMAP is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford region. MPOs are established in urbanized areas exceeding a population of 50,000 to implement a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process to ensure transportation dollars are wisely invested throughout the region to promote access, mobility, economic development, and environmental safeguards.

RMAP is governed by an eight member Policy Committee consisting of the chief elected officials of Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Belvidere, Boone County, Winnebago County, the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) and a representative from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Region 2. The Policy Committee receives recommendations from the Technical Committee, made up of professional experts in engineering, planning and zoning, economic development, natural resource agencies and more from around the region. RMAP oversees more than \$350 million annually in transportation improvements in the region.

RMAP's Planning Area Boundary



ourmap
Rockford Metropolitan Agency For Planning
our future, our goals, our map

The 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

RMAP is federally-required to prepare and update a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that examines past trends, current conditions and anticipates future needs to create a blueprint for transportation investment over a 25 year time frame for the region. The LRTP is about more than just the roadway network- it takes a multimodal approach, integrating roadway, public transportation, railway, airport, and bike and pedestrian considerations. The LRTP is required to foster mobility and access for people and goods, efficient system performance and preservation, and a high quality of life.

RMAP is required to update the LRTP every 5 years in order to reflect changes in population, employment, and land use as well as shifts in federal policies and constantly evolving regional priorities. RMAP monitors data on travel patterns, congestion, pavement and bridge conditions, safety, changes in commercial and residential development, air quality and much more to analyze the performance of the transportation network. This analysis highlights the interconnected nature of land use and transportation, such as how residential development in one area of the region may affect commuting patterns to another. These trends then form the baseline for a computerized model simulation which is used to forecast future travel demands.

RMAP staff works closely with city, county, regional and state planning and implementing agencies to develop a list of regionally significant transportation improvement projects to be completed during the 25 year planning horizon. Project identification in the LRTP is a requirement for all federally funded transportation projects, making the LRTP a critical first step in turning a project into reality. All projects that are selected for inclusion in the document include cost estimates and potential project funding-federal regulations require that only projects that can be reasonably funded within the plan lifespan be included. Projects selected commonly include: reconstruction projects to repair and modernize existing roadways, capacity expansion designed to accommodate new users and reduce delays, transit network expansion, safety improvements, and pedestrian accommodations such as shared-use paths.

The first draft of the update LRTP will be released in February of 2015. A formal public comment period will be open in February and run through March 2015. Public comments will be taken into consideration as the final document is produced, and all comments which are received will be featured in an appendix of the final plan. In fall of 2014 RMAP hosted several open houses around the region to gather public input on the current LRTP. Another round of open houses is planned for February and March 2015; a schedule of these open houses will be published on the RMAP website (www.rmapil.org) and sent to the RMAP mailing list and media contacts. The final updated 2040 RMAP Long Range Transportation Plan is tentatively scheduled to be formally adopted by the RMAP Policy Committee on July 30th, 2015.

Guiding Principles of the LRTP

- *Efficiently preserve the existing transportation system*
- *Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users*
- *Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight*
- *Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight*
- *Promote efficient system management and operation*
- *Support the economic vitality of the Rockford Metropolitan Area*
- *Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life and promote consistency between State and local planned growth and economic development patterns*

How can I learn more and get involved?

The Long Range Transportation Plan is the roadmap for transportation investment over the next 25 years—we need your input to make sure that we are headed in the right direction. Many of the key decisions made about improvements to the transportation system are made years in advanced of when construction crews begin working on a project. Your early involvement is key; you are much more likely to influence the future of transportation investments in your neighborhood, community, and region during the planning stages rather than once a project prepares to break ground.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- **Attend RMAP monthly committee meetings.** A schedule of committee meetings and agendas is posted on the RMAP's website (www.rmapil.org). An opportunity for public comment is offered during all meetings.
- **Request to be added to our mailing list** to receive RMAP news and notices.
- **View our documents.** All of RMAP's major documents can be accessed online or at the RMAP offices located at 313 N. Main Street, Rockford 61101. Public comment is always accepted on all draft and current documents.
- **Get in touch with us.** Stop by our office, call us, write to us, or email us. Ask us to speak at your next community, organization, or school meeting. RMAP staff is always happy to answer any of your questions or put you in contact with the appropriate person or agency.

Other Federally-Required Documents

The **Unified Work Program** (UWP) outlines the tasks the agency will undertake for the year. The tasks included in the UWP are selected in consultation with RMAP's partner agencies to reflect the local needs of the region.

The **Transportation Improvement Program** (TIP) is a short-range planning document which contains all federally-funded and regionally significant transportation improvements which will be initiated or constructed within a 4-year planning horizon. Projects in the TIP are developed as a result of identification of long-range transportation goals.

The **Human Services Transportation Plan** (HSTP) is a locally developed, coordinated transportation plan that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, elderly individuals and persons with low income. The plan develops policies and strategies to address these needs, prioritize service, and overall increase the efficiency of services provided to public transit dependent populations.

The **Public Participation Plan** (PPP) is a document that identifies the outreach methods taken to engage the public in transportation planning decisions. This document provides additional information outlining the transportation planning process and information regarding other RMAP planning documents.

The Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP) maintains a **Title VI and Environmental Justice Program** to ensure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, *that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which RMAP receives federal financial assistance.*