

BOONE & WINNEBAGO COUNTY REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Since 2011, the Rockford Region has been working to develop our first regional plan for sustainable development. This initiative, called "Rockford Region Vital Signs", is based first and foremost on taking the social, economic, and environmental pulse of the Rockford Region. Once community leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the region's sustainability and well-being, it is our belief they can be more strategic in determining what needs to be done to improve the community.

Three reports are being released between now and early 2013 aiming to empower community leaders from diverse backgrounds, for perhaps the first time in concert, to have a clear picture of the region's interworking parts. The hope is our regions' leaders may then begin a conversation on how to improve the region's sustainability by initiating one conversation as a region about our collective and individual future well-being.

Vital Signs is led by a local consortium of over 30 regional agencies agreeing to support and align their strategic plans and long-range visions to the final sustainability plan. The RMAP Policy Committee also formed a Steering Team of nearly 100 community leaders to help develop regional goals for the sixteen areas of sustainability and to recommend a governance structure empowered to implement the RPSD upon its submission and acceptance by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Many individuals have contributed to the development of the Vital Signs project. In particular the grant management staff wish to recognize the significant contribution of the Winnebago County Geographic Information System (WinGIS) for their technical

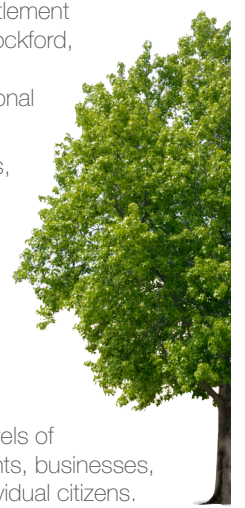
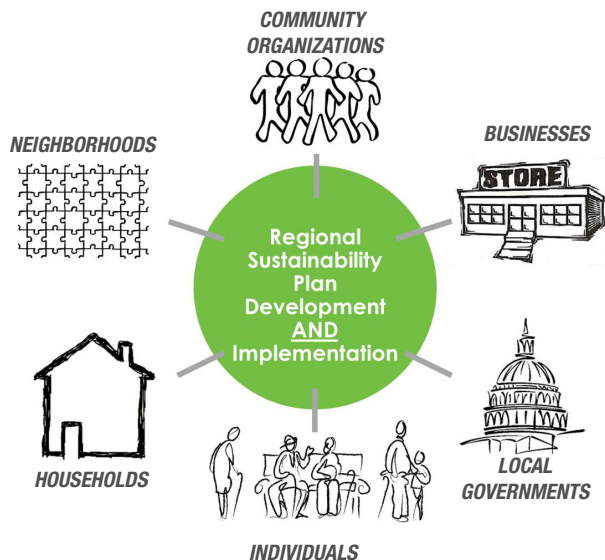
expertise and assistance with deployment of the Vital Signs website and the open data platform on which it resides.

This initiative is being accomplished in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The contents, views, policies and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the above agencies.

THE PROCESS

The Vital Signs project includes five agreed upon deliverable products to HUD:

- An open data platform consisting of a "data commons" that contains publicly-available and privately-purchased data sets to help document the current conditions of the region and to guide future performance measurement of sustainability implementation. As of the writing of this document this work is essentially complete. The Vital Signs website is www.ourvitalsigns.com.
- A regional governance model that empowers the region to compete, receive and implement sustainability initiatives and to plan for the entire metro area. RMAP has already received "Preferred Sustainability Status" from HUD, but currently the RMAP Policy Committee is only empowered to act on behalf of the census-defined urban areas within the two counties. As of this writing the recommendation of a regional governance model is before the RMAP Policy Committee.
- A formal regional analysis of housing, defined for grantees as a "Fair Housing Equity Assessment" by HUD. Additionally, RMAP has agreed to also include a regional "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice". This additional work will position entitlement grantees within the region (City of Rockford, Rockford Housing Authority) to align their HUD-required plans with a regional focus.
- A toolkit of model codes, ordinances, policies, incentives and agreements known as "implementation tools" that can assist the implementation of the RPSD.
- The final Regional Plan for Sustainable Development document. This plan document will have a 20-year horizon and include strategies and action steps for all levels of the region including local governments, businesses, non-profits, neighborhoods and individual citizens.



INTRODUCING VITAL SIGNS...

The Rockford Region Vital Signs website is an interactive data portal taking the pulse of the region's sustainability. It includes an online mapping that provides a wealth of information about the Metro's people, communities, and neighborhoods through a wide variety of topics -- from economic development and arts to the housing and transportation.

A resource for all those seeking to understand how the area is evolving with our Region's sustainability goals, it helps residents, businesses, organizations, municipal staff, elected officials, and journalists explore options and make more strategic and informed decisions on how to help the region's social, economic, and environmental well-being. We invite you to explore our region's data, community snapshots, and maps on this site. Collectively these are called Visualizations (maps, charts, graphs, etc).

In addition, if you are interested in becoming an advanced user we encourage you to sign up for training and create your own visualizations and reports. Rockford Region Vital Signs is sponsored by the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The website URL is <http://www.ourvitalsigns.com>.

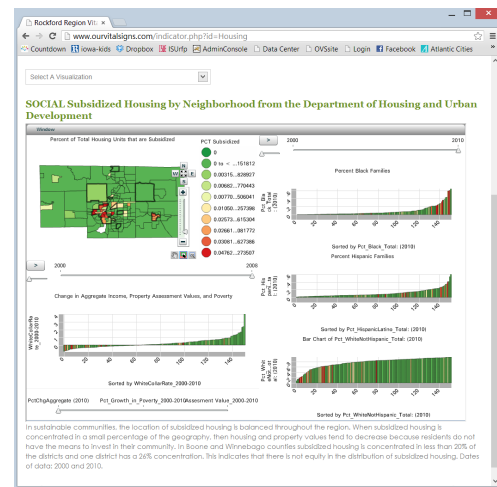


INTRODUCING WEAVE...

A web-based visualization platform designed to enable visualization of any available data by anyone for any purpose. WEAVE is in development by the Open Indicators Consortium (OIC). To learn more about WEAVE, check out www.oicweave.org.

LOOKING AT SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH 16 TOPICS

A crucial component of our process measuring regional sustainability indicators. These sustainability measurements help the community understand the social, economic, and environmental impact of our region's 16 different areas of sustainability. Its preventative healthcare and home-grown remedies all in one.



SPEAKUP! & GET INVOLVED

All interested parties have a role and are ambassadors for the Vital Signs project. Vital Signs is using several forms of community engagement including committees, public meetings, open houses and social media. In addition Vital Signs has secured a web-based tool called MindMixer that allows input in a "digital town hall meeting" format. Input and feedback opportunities on all aspects of the Vital Signs project are available at <http://speakup.ourvitalsigns.com>. Ideas can be for households, neighborhoods, businesses, organizations, or local governments to make the community more sustainable. The website allows interested parties to submit, vote and comment on sustainability topics. The engagement results will inform the Topic Teams that community members may join to help identify and develop targeted strategies for the region to improve sustainability and well-being.

CONTACT US

Steve Ernst,
RMAP Executive Director

Phone: 815.964.RMAP
www.rmapil.org
steve.ernst@rockfordil.gov

Genevieve Borich, Project Manager

Phone: 312.550.3488
gborich@ourvitalsigns.com

WWW.OURVITALSIGNS.COM