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Downtown Rockford Strategic Action Plan Receives Best Practice Award *Recognition marks second honor of plan's strategy and implementation*

ROCKFORD, Ill. – The *Downtown Rockford Strategic Action Plan* was recognized with the Best Practice Award by the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-IL) during a recognition ceremony in September. Rockford City Administrator and former director of community and economic development director Todd Cagnoni, accepted the award on behalf of the City with members from Farr Associates, the planning consultant for the project, and staff from Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP), the plan's co-sponsor.

The action plan takes more than a decade of previously conceived recommendations, primarily focused on adding downtown housing, linking open space, and improving mobility choices, refines them, and focuses on phases of implementation through a 'Tactical, Lean, Climax (TLC)' approach. This approach allows for testing through prototypes, and more immediate results that lead to incremental and impactful development. The implementation strategies are subdivided into TLC strategies that take a larger goal and show how to implement it through short, mid, and long-term steps.

Some of the actions implemented include:

- Traffic calming installations featuring temporary bike and pedestrian shared-use space with planters and bollards along the State Street Bridge.
- A new downtown event series, Shop the Blocks, was created and launched three times during the summer of 2015, and has continued since, even expanding in frequency and beyond summer months. Shop the Blocks elements include temporary parklets in parking spaces and parking lots, pop-up shops, live music, and outdoor dining and retail sales.



The APA-IL Planning Award winners were recognized for the “outstanding planning efforts from across the state [that] exemplify the practice of urban planning.” Specifically, the *Downtown Rockford Strategic Action Plan* and its companion booklet was lauded for its “approach for action” and its “case study that provides step-by-step guidance on how to apply the ‘TLC’ principles in other neighborhoods in Rockford, and elsewhere.”

Cagnoni presented the plan during a speed planning session roundtable at the APA-IL 2017 State Conference which was held prior to the recognition ceremony.

The recognition marks the second award for the downtown plan, having received the Congress for the New Urbanism Illinois highest honor, the Charter Award in December 2016.

“We are honored to once again receive recognition for the city’s downtown strategic action plan,” said Cagnoni. “The successes we have seen to date are a great testament to outcomes that can be realized when we work together with partners and organizations toward a common goal.”

The plan, executive summary and progress report may be accessed via the city website at <https://rockfordil.gov/city-departments/community-and-economic-development/long-range-planning/downtown-strategic-action-plan/>.

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