



February 21st, 2018

PRESS RELEASE

Transform Rockford:

- Home Rule Authority for City of Rockford Supports Region's Transformation
 - We encourage residents to support referendum

ROCKFORD, IL. – Transform Rockford today announced its support for the March 20, 2018, referendum to restore home rule authority to the City of Rockford. Leadership of the Transform Rockford movement also encourages the City's voters to show their support for the referendum.

Why does Transform Rockford support the referendum and encourage others to support it?

- **Move authority from state to local government, where accountability and capacity is greater,**
- **Accelerate the region's transformation,**
- **Publicly demonstrate our community's desire to control its destiny.**

Background

In 2013, our region began work to become a top community in America. Since then, thousands of residents have engaged in meaningful actions that are leading to transformation. A set of shared values, a shared vision and a strategic plan have been developed to guide the region's transformation. To date, 45 projects from that strategic plan are underway.

Central to the community's work are the concepts of shared responsibility, accountability, and action. Our community's vision anticipates Top 25 recognition for the region, and a condition where – among other things – our community's leaders are visionary, effective, respected and supported.

Alignment with the community's shared values and shared vision

Transform Rockford believes **the community is ready to restore home rule**. Said David Schertz, vice chairman of the Transform Rockford steering committee, "A 'yes' vote is consistent with the community's desire to transform and control its fate."

Transform Rockford believes the region's transformation will be advanced by restoring home rule to the region's largest city. The subject of home rule has been raised in numerous community discussions and efforts in transformation – including those focused on public safety, neighborhood redevelopment, the health of residents, the City's reliance on property taxes, and improved perceptions of the community by ourselves and by third parties assessing us.

“Transformation is underway, and we are optimistic about our region’s future. To best **maintain the momentum**, we believe local matters should have local control,” said Mike Schablaske, executive director of Transform Rockford.

City of Rockford leadership has taken important steps that indicate its desire to carefully use home rule authority and be held accountable, including:

- The adoption of “Guiding Principles” that align with the region’s **shared vision**,
- Broad community engagement in processes, including this referendum and the budget review,
- The adoption of self-limiting home rule ordinances, based on community feedback,
- No increase in the City’s property tax levy for multiple years, and
- The adoption of a debt ceiling well below what is allowed by the State of Illinois.

Added Schablaske, “We are glad to see City leadership broadly engaging residents, taking feedback, and adjusting course. Those are good indicators of engagement and accountability – factors this community and the Transform Rockford movement value highly.”

“The restoration and prudent use of home rule is consistent with the community’s **shared values** of responsibility, trustworthiness, and transparency. We urge voters to vote YES to make Rockford a home rule unit on March 20, 2018,” concluded Schertz

About Transform Rockford: The Transform Rockford movement facilitates and supports the Rockford region’s transformation into one of the very best American communities – a Top 25 community. We use a proven process and are committed to broad community engagement, shared values, shared vision and best practices.

Learn more about Transform Rockford:

Web: www.transformrockford.org <http://rkfdtop25.org/>

Twitter: @TransformRkfd

Facebook: www.facebook.com/transform.rockford Instagram: TransformRockford

YouTube: www.youtube.com/TransformRkfd

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