
Greenest Region Corps

2020-2021 Overview and Accomplishments

Presented By: Kristen Hayden & Cynthia Segura
Slides By: Elaine Simon & Katie Friedman



Collaborating for Sustainable Communities.





What is the Greenest Region Corps?

The Greenest Region Corps pairs emerging sustainability professionals with local governments and partner agencies to lead sustainability initiatives in the Chicago Metropolitan Region.

How it works

Local Action:

- Members work with municipal staff and elected officials to **build capacity for local sustainability initiatives** at a single host site.

Regional Collaboration:

- Members **facilitate collaboration towards shared regional goals** through regular team meetings, committees, and other regional projects.

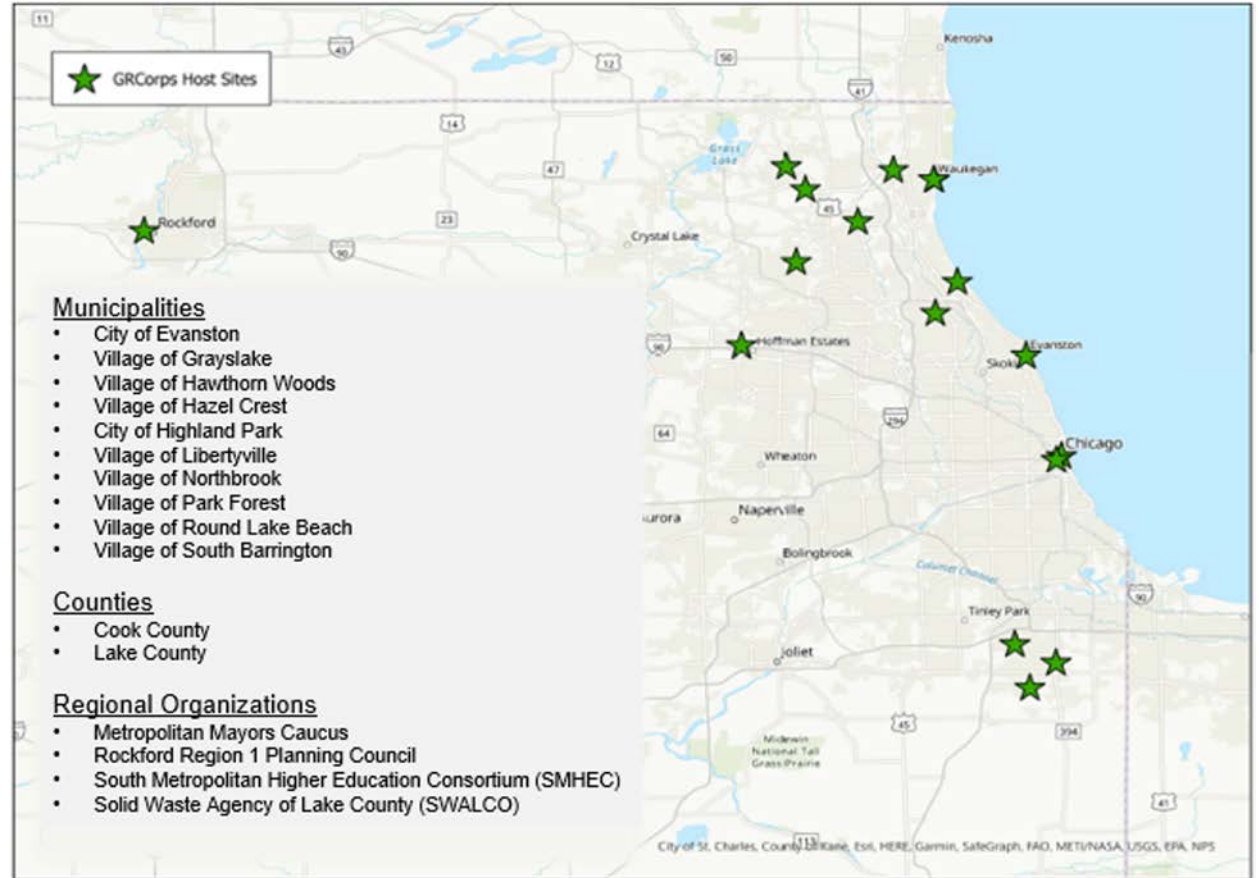
Leadership Development:

- Members **cultivate their expertise and expand their professional networks** through ongoing training from technical experts and opportunities to represent host sites at conferences and other events.

GRCorps Host Sites 2018-2021

*30 GRCorps Members have
served a population of
nearly*

***6 million residents**
across the Chicago region*



The Greenest Region Compact (GRC)

A Framework for Local Sustainability




Greenest Region Compact

COLLABORATING FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The member municipalities of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus seek a vibrant, sustainable future for their communities and the greater Chicago region. The consensus goals of the Greenest Region Compact aim for enhanced quality of life for residents; protection and stewardship of the environment and sustainable economic vitality.

To become the most sustainable and successful region in the United States, they, therefore, support the following consensus goals of the Greenest Region Compact and agree to work to achieve them, both in their own communities and in collaboration throughout the region:

- Climate**
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Maintain clean and healthful air
 - Develop resiliency to climate change impacts
 - Engage the community in climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Economic Development**
 - Promote innovation and a competitive workforce
 - Cultivate local and sustainable development, jobs, and businesses
- Energy**
 - Use energy for buildings and facilities efficiently
 - Advance renewable energy
 - Reduce energy consumption
 - Enact policies that support clean energy
 - Engage the community in clean energy practices
- Land**
 - Encourage strategic development that upholds sustainability principles
 - Conserve, restore and enhance natural features and ecosystems
 - Support networks of accessible, well-used, and enjoyable parks
 - Sustain a robust urban forest canopy
 - Sustain beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services
 - Achieve greater livability through sustainable land use and housing policies
 - Cultivate a conservation ethic in the community



- Leadership**
 - Enlist support for GRC2 goals through regional, state and national leadership
 - Advocate for policies that align with and advance the GRC2
 - Work collaboratively towards a sustainable region
- Mobility**
 - Support safe and effective active transportation
 - Maintain a diverse, safe, and efficient transportation network
 - Support efficient transportation that uses resources wisely
 - Integrate sustainability into transportation policies, programs, and regulations
 - Promote public and sustainable transportation choices
- Municipal Operations**
 - Lead by demonstrating sustainable values and practices
 - Integrate sustainability into all municipal operations
 - Operate a safe, clean and efficient fleet
 - Collect and manage data to advance sustainability
- Sustainable Communities**
 - Promote cultural vibrancy in the community
 - Foster a culture of health, safety, and wellness
 - Increase access to sustainably grown local food
 - Sustain community principles that are welcoming, inclusive and equitable
 - Promote a sustainable identity for the community
 - Ensure local policies and codes support sustainability
 - Cultivate community values based on principles of sustainability
- Waste & Recycling**
 - Support sustainable material management
 - Recycle materials across all sectors
 - Divert waste from landfills
 - Enact policies that cause sustainable material management
 - Engage the community in waste reduction and recycling
- Water**
 - Use and distribute water efficiently
 - Protect and improve water quality
 - Manage water system assets sustainably
 - Optimize the use of natural and built systems to manage stormwater
 - Practice stewardship of water resources
 - Enact policies to protect water resources
 - Engage the community in water stewardship

- **Consensus Sustainability Pledge** adopted by 136 communities in the Chicago region
- 49 high-level sustainability goals
- Guides municipal sustainability actions
- Accompanying framework outlines 412 possible objectives/strategies to meet GRC goals

Measuring Local Impact

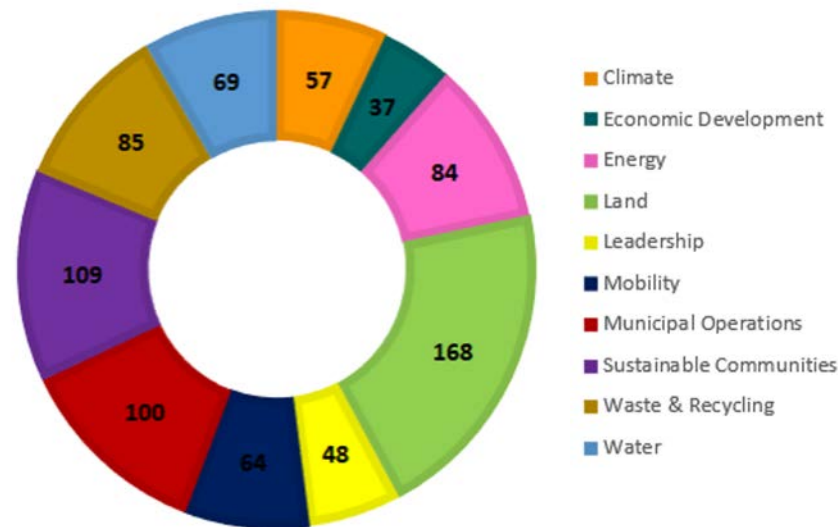
3-Year Accomplishment Highlights



By the Numbers:

- **45,017 volunteer hours** contributed
- **16 local host sites** served
- **820 municipal sustainability objectives** met
- **\$300,000+ in grant funds** secured from public and private funders to support local initiatives
- **60+ trees** planted
- **5 sustainability plans** published
- **4 community asset and story maps** created
- **3 community sustainability surveys** crafted
- **2 Greenhouse Gas Inventories** developed

OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED BY CATEGORY
2018-2020



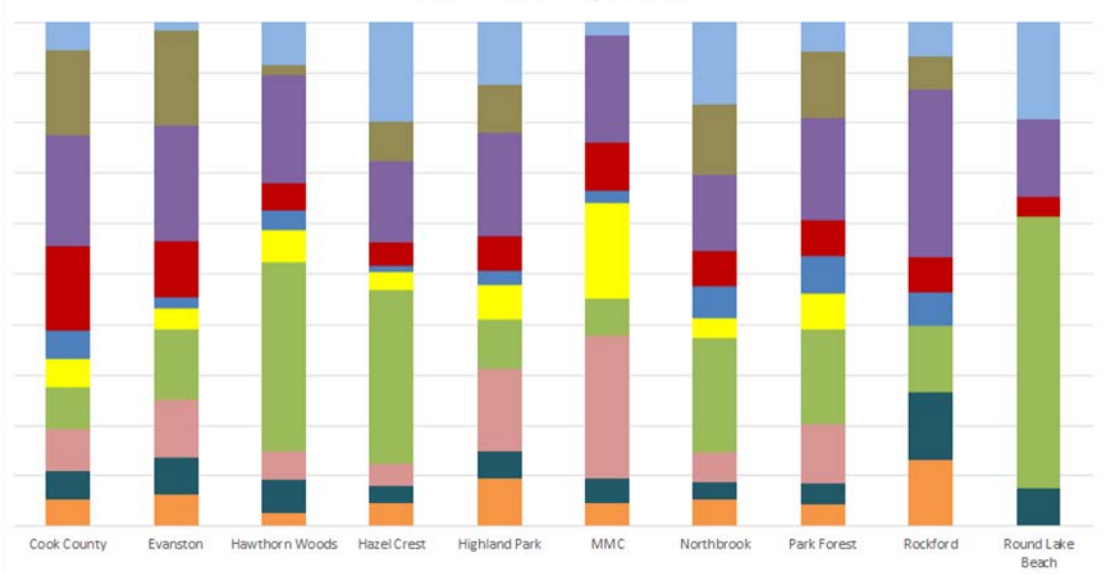
2020-2021 Accomplishment Summary

The 2020-2021 GRCorps **addressed all 49 Goals** of the GRC and **met 257 unique objectives** across 10 categories

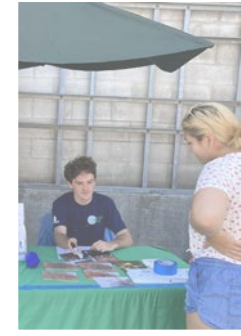
GRC Focus Areas 2020-2021



GRC Focus Areas by Host Site



Climate Economic Development Energy Land Leadership Mobility Municipal Operations Sustainable Communities Waste & Recycling Water



2020-2021 GRCorps Accomplishments by Project Category



CLIMATE

Climate Goals:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Maintain clean and healthful air
- Develop resiliency to climate change impacts
- Engage the community in climate change mitigation and adaptation

**18 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

*Reduce GHG
Emissions*

ADDRESSED BY

9/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford

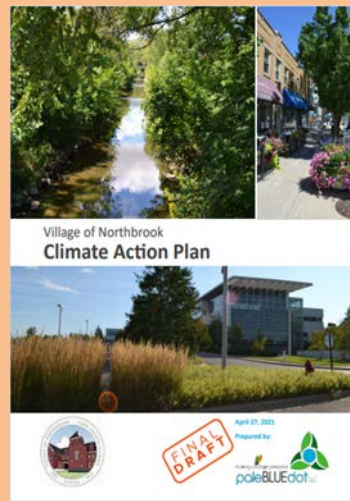


Project Highlight

Municipality: Northbrook

Member: Tessa Murray

Project: Climate Action Plan



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Goals:

- Promote innovation and a competitive workforce
- Cultivate local and sustainable development, jobs, and businesses

**9 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

Cultivate local and sustainable development, jobs, and businesses

ADDRESSED BY

10/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford
Round Lake Beach



Project Highlight

Municipality: Evanston

Member: Ajiah Gilbert & Liam Engel

Project: Sustain Evanston



ENERGY

Energy Goals:

- Use energy for buildings and facilities efficiently
- Advance renewable energy
- Reduce energy consumption
- Enact policies that support clean energy
- Engage the community in clean energy practices

**28 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

*Use energy for
buildings and facilities
efficiently*

ADDRESSED BY

8/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest



Project Highlight

Municipality: Highland Park

Member: Natalie Grimaldi

Project: Natural Gas Reduction Education Campaign

NORTH SHORE GAS
ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

City of Highland Park

Save Energy and Money

Make Your Home and Business More Energy Efficient

Join the **City of Highland Park**, **North Shore Gas**, and **Power Bureau, LLC** for a webinar focused on energy savings for your home and business.

Gain knowledge on the following:

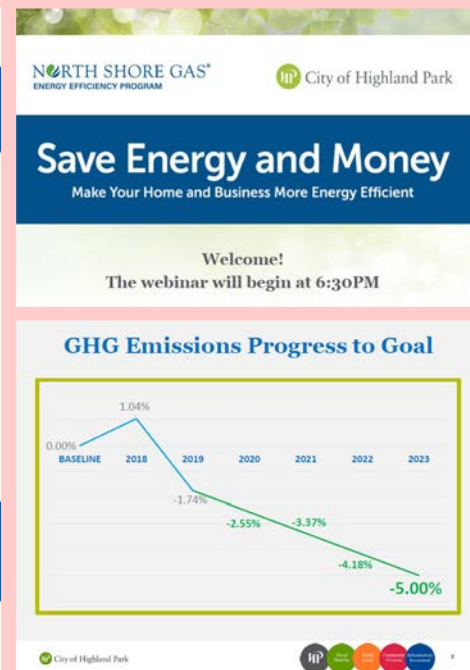
- Incentives and funding available for energy-efficiency upgrades
- City of Highland Park Community Solar Program
- Benefits of energy efficiency, including saving money and improving comfort and sustainability

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 **Time:** 6:30 p.m.

Register today!
Visit <http://bit.ly/HPEnergyMarch3>

Or use the QR code to sign up:
• Open the camera on your smartphone.
• Position your smartphone so the QR code is visible on your screen.
• Register for the webinar.

For more information on rebates and incentives through North Shore Gas, visit us at www.northshoregasdelivery.com/savings.
This program is a partnership between North Shore Gas and the City of Highland Park. © 2021 North Shore Gas. 822-8888-822-888



LAND

Land Goals:

- Encourage strategic development that upholds sustainability principles
- Conserve, restore and enhance natural features and ecosystems
- Support networks of accessible, well-used, and enjoyable parks
- Sustain a robust urban forest canopy
- Sustain beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services
- Achieve greater livability through sustainable land use and housing policies
- Cultivate a conservation ethic in the community

**68 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

*Sustain a robust
urban forest canopy*

ADDRESSED BY

10/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford
Round Lake Beach



Project Highlight

Municipality: Hawthorn Woods

Member: Robin Grooms

Project: Pollinator Pockets



LEADERSHIP

Leadership Goals:

- Enlist support for GRC2 goals through regional, state and national leadership
- Advocate for policies that align with and advance the GRC2
- Work collaboratively towards a sustainable region

**11 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

*Enlist support for
GRC2 goals through
regional, state, and
national leadership*

ADDRESSED BY

8/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest



Project Highlight

Municipality: Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

Member: Cynthia Segura

Project: Climate Action Plan



Mitigation



Adaptation



**GLOBAL COVENANT
of MAYORS for
CLIMATE & ENERGY
UNITED STATES**

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
FOR THE CHICAGO REGION

2021

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus | 10/24

DRAFT

MOBILITY

Mobility Goals:

- Support safe and effective active transportation
- Maintain a diverse, safe, and efficient transportation network
- Support efficient transportation that uses resources wisely
- Integrate sustainability into transportation policies, programs, and regulations
- Promote public and sustainable transportation choices

**21 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

Support safe and effective active transportation; AND Support efficient transportation that uses resources wisely

ADDRESSED BY

9/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
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MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford



Project Highlight

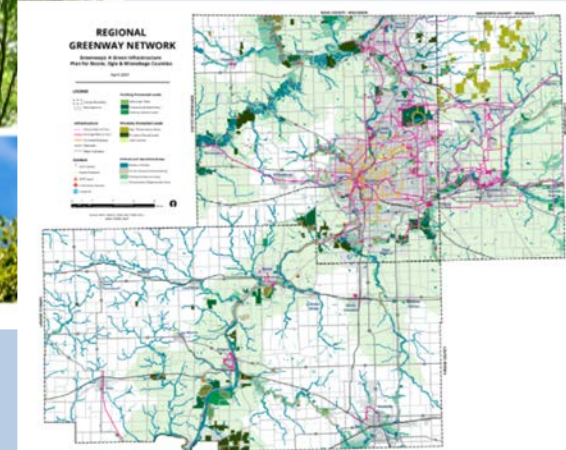
Organization: Region 1 Planning Council

Member: Kristen Hayden

Project: Greenways Plan

2021 Greenways:

A Greenways Plan for
Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties



MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

Municipal Operations Goals:

- Lead by demonstrating sustainable values and practices
- Integrate sustainability into all municipal operations
- Operate a safe, clean and efficient fleet
- Collect and manage data to advance sustainability

23 OBJECTIVES MET

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

Lead by demonstrating sustainable values and practices

ADDRESSED BY 10/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford
Round Lake Beach



Project Highlight

Municipality: Park Forest

Member: Alex Bazan

Project: Sustainability Accomplishments Tracking Document

Department	CARP Category	2016	2017	2018
Village-Wide	Transportation	The Village's Complete Streets Policy was named the 3rd best policy (tied with 2 other communities) in the US by Smart Growth America.	Bicycle Signage and Directional Signs installed along all bike routes included in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan The Village completed installation of a sidewalk along US30/Lincoln Highway from Indiana Street to Orchard Drive as part of an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant CMAQ funding was used to install bikeway pavement marking along Federal Aid qualified routes consistent with Bike and Pedestrian Plan. This project added 12.8 miles of narrow markings along Village roads. Five pedestrian cut-throughs were improved to install 10 foot wide multi-use paths, (replaced five foot paths), new lighting, and ADA connections at streets.	Village applied for RTA Access to Transit/CMAQ funding to complete the sidewalk from Orchard Drive to the Village's eastern limit
Parks, Recreation & Community Health		Cut down about 250 feet of invasive trees in about three acres of the Central Park wetlands. Cleared 1,833 linear feet of drainage way in Central Park of woody vegetation in Central Park.	Cut down about 250 feet of invasive trees in about three acres of the Central Park wetlands. Cleared 1,833 linear feet of drainage way in Central Park of woody vegetation in Central Park Removed weeds, trees, and other undesirable species of plants at the Fire Training site Bike converted 18 water drainage back and reduced erosion	Cut down about 250 feet of invasive trees in about three acres of the Central Park wetlands. Cleared 1,833 linear feet of drainage way in Central Park of woody vegetation in Central Park Removed weeds, trees, and other undesirable species of

Material	Action	Unit	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Paper	Recycled	pounds								12,000	6,000	3,000	15,000	12,000		48,000
Cardboard	Recycled	pounds													220	220
Electronics	Recycled	pounds								8,783	2,432	13,000	19,000	32,000		75,215
TV	Recycled	count								232	169	208	70	144		823
Eye glasses	Recycled	count								300		240	248	58		916
Clothes and shoes	Recycled	pounds									482	1,316	3,500	2,520		7,818
Plastic bags	Recycled	pounds										15	36	112		163
Plastic bags	Recycled	50 gallon trash bag									2					2
Medication	Recycled	bottles									200	36	40	42		200
Polystyrene	Recycled	pounds												20	138	158
Books	Recycled	count											8,157	4,455		12,612
Flags	Recycled	count											28	84		112
Bikes	Recycled	count											26	3		29
Trophies	Recycled	count												252		252
Batteries	Recycled	pounds								500						500
Street Light	LED Upgrade	count								95	131	19	117			362
Light fixtures	LED Upgrade	count								32		288				320
Parking lot lights	LED Upgrade	count										36				36
Canopy lights	LED Upgrade	count											178			178
Total Lights	LED Upgrade	count								127	131	343	295			896
Medicine bottles	Recycled	count											328	140		478

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Sustainable Communities Goals:

- Promote cultural vibrancy in the community
- Foster a culture of health, safety, and wellness
- Increase access to sustainably grown local food
- Sustain community principles that are welcoming, inclusive and equitable
- Promote a sustainable identity for the community
- Ensure local policies and codes support sustainability
- Cultivate community values based on principles of sustainability

28 OBJECTIVES MET

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

Cultivate community values based on principles of sustainability

**ADDRESSED BY
10/10
HOST COMMUNITIES**

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
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Northbrook
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Rockford
Round Lake Beach



Project Highlight

Municipality: Hazel Crest

Member: Jordan Henderson

Project: Community Survey

Sustainability Priorities

The final, and largest, section of the survey identified specific priorities that community members had regarding Village sustainability. These questions asked for respondents to choose the most important items among broader issues of:

- Climate Change
- Sustainable Transportation
- Energy
- Greenspace and Natural Areas
- Green Economy
- Water
- Waste

The respective items were chosen from several sustainability solutions offered within the Greenest Region Compact.

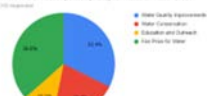
What is the most important priority for Climate Change in Hazel Crest?



What is the most important priority for Energy in Hazel Crest?



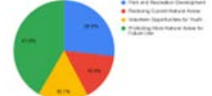
What is the most important priority for Water in Hazel Crest?



What is the most important priority for Sustainable Transportation in Hazel Crest?



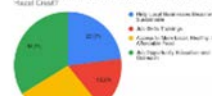
What is the most important priority for Greenspace and Natural Areas in Hazel Crest?



What is the most important priority for Waste in Hazel Crest?

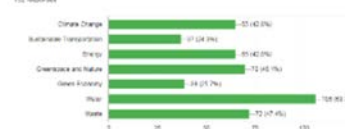


What is the most important priority for a Green Economy in Hazel Crest?



After these individual topics, respondents were asked one final question, which of the previous sustainability topics would you consider to be the 3 most important?

Please select three (3) of the following sustainability priorities you think the Village should focus on the most.



Analysis

Perceptions on sustainability are somewhat mixed within Hazel Crest. Around 55% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the sentiment that the Village is sustainable. However, the second largest group of respondents did not have an opinion either way. Adding to the fact that nearly 90% of respondents think the Village should continue increasing sustainability, and we begin to see that respondents may want to see much more action taken by the Village than is currently being done. And when determining what types of actions to take, respondents did not feel that short or long-term needs need to be the most important factor. 78% stated that projects should move forward even if it does not save the Village money.

WASTE & RECYCLING

Waste & Recycling Goals:

- Support sustainable material management
- Recycle materials across all sectors
- Divert waste from landfills
- Enact policies that cause sustainable material management
- Engage the community in waste reduction and recycling

32 OBJECTIVES MET

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

Support Sustainable material management

ADDRESSED BY

8/10

HOST COMMUNITIES

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford



Project Highlight

Municipality: Cook County

Member: Elaine Simon

Project: Educational Materials

COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

FOOD WASTE

Did you know that food waste creates methane?

When organic material is broken down by microbes in an environment without oxygen, methane is released into the atmosphere. Methane is a greenhouse gas many times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

REDUCE

Buy only the food you need, and store it properly.

Meal Planning

- ✓ Choose the meals you will make before you go to the grocery store.
- ✓ Make a list with the ingredients you will need & stick to the list.

Proper Food Storage

Research how to store fresh foods to last as long as possible.

Some common examples:

- Apples should be put in the fridge right away, while bananas can be left on the countertop to ripen and placed in the fridge once ripe.
- Most fruits and vegetables can be frozen and used later. Exceptions include lettuce, eggplant, and potatoes.
- Preserving, canning, and pickling are great strategies for preventing food waste – especially for large quantities of fruits or vegetables.

REUSE

Process food and utilize food scraps.

Food Scraps

Find a second use for food scraps. For example, veggie scraps can be boiled in water to make vegetable broth. And citrus peels can be candied!

It's still safe to try or use quantities.

COOKCOUNTYIL.GOV @COOKENVIRO

Electronic Waste 101

Find out what electronic waste is and how to properly dispose of it.



WATER

Water Goals:

- Use and distribute water efficiently
- Protect and improve water quality
- Manage water system assets sustainably
- Optimize the use of natural and built systems to manage stormwater
- Practice stewardship of water resources
- Enact policies to protect water resources
- Engage the community in water stewardship

**19 OBJECTIVES
MET**

MOST FREQUENTLY ADDRESSED GOAL

*Optimize the use of
natural and built
systems to manage
stormwater*

**ADDRESSED BY
10/10
HOST COMMUNITIES**

Cook County
Evanston
Hawthorn Woods
Hazel Crest
Highland Park
MMC
Northbrook
Park Forest
Rockford
Round Lake Beach



Project Highlight

Municipality: Round Lake Beach

Member: Robyn Oas

Project: Wetland Management Plan

Wetland Management Plan

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas of land where the water covers the soil, or is near the surface of the soil, all or almost all of the year.

Round Lake Beach is rich with these valuable features and has created a plan to ensure their restoration and maintenance.

The Plan

Purpose

The Round Lake Beach Wetland Management Plan outlines effective measures to restore the Village's wetlands and provides a plan to do so spanning the next twenty years.

Overview

The Management Plan details the necessary actions for restoration of the Village's thirty one wetlands as well as key partnerships and financial outlook.

Residents

Residents can assist the Village in maintaining the health of wetlands. Here are some helpful tips:

- Ensure the wetland is clear of debris. For proper waste disposal visit <https://www.swalco.org>
- Leave a buffer of taller vegetation along shorelines to allow deeper roots to establish and decrease erosion.



Stay Informed

For more information on the Wetland Management Plan, please visit the Village's website.



Thank You!

Contact info

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Cynthia Segura - csegura@citizensutilityboard.org