





City of
DeKalb
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Forging a Sustainable Community
in DeKalb, Illinois





The alignment of local sustainability goals with regional, national and global goals is a daunting challenge. If world powers with their enormous, pooled resources cannot agree on consensus targets, how can DeKalb make a difference? A model framework for municipal action that builds consensus regarding higher level goals without draining limited fiscal resources or exploding personnel budgets is available to help guide DeKalb's gradual assumption of goals and action steps.

The "Greenest Region Compact" broadly supported by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus of Illinois sets up definable objectives and the collaborative benefits of municipalities and county governments in the northern Illinois region. To date, 275 governmental bodies including cities, towns, villages and counties in the Chicagoland area have adopted the framework, which only requires a commitment for each entity to adopt its own sustainability plan, and tailor objectives and strategies to advance their own sustainability agendas, at the pace which their fiscal resources and consensual action steps require.



The City of DeKalb has installed two electric vehicle charging stations in the downtown.

The Greenest Region Compact (GRC) was launched in 2007 with a pledge adopted by 100 communities. An update known as "GRC2" was adopted in March 2016. The high-level GRC

goal categories fall into 10 sustainability categories: *climate, economic development, energy, land, leadership, mobility, municipal operations, sustainable communities, water, and waste & recycling*. These categories conform to the focus areas of this study. The tenth GRC2 category is "Leadership."

More than a sustainability category, Leadership is the essential trait which is needed if any of the GRC2 goals are to be reached locally. Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. And the path to learning is the humble notion that lasting answers are born of cooperation and collaboration.

Goals

- Promote use of City properties for installation and operation of renewable energy systems.
- Support the adoption of renewable energy in the community.
- Budget and plan for long-term energy efficiency equipment upgrades.
- Power down equipment when possible.
- Approve the GRC resolution.
- Join Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

Action Steps

- Extend the ground lease with SunVest Solar, Inc. for a 40-acre, 5MW commercial solar energy facility on the DeKalb/Taylor Municipal Airport property. The lease has been extended until December 31, 2024 or until a determination by the Illinois Power Agency to proceed with construction. Substantial completion is expected in April 2025 so a further lease extension will be required. The project is following an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement (AIMA) with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.
- Surpass the 2023 total of private, roof-top residential solar installations. The total permitted residential projects in 2022 was 50; the total in 2023 was 74. Additionally, Kohl's and Write Stuff added permitted, roof-top commercial solar arrays in 2023.
- Bidding for replacement buses for the City's transit system will include invitations to price diesel-electric buses which are about \$900,000 per bus (straight diesel is about \$600,000/bus, and all-electric are about \$1.2 million).
- Continue to pump potable water at "off-peak" hours to save energy and retain energy savings.
- Place GRC resolution on City Council agenda in June.
- Begin membership in Metropolitan Mayors Caucus on August 1, 2024.



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