



## VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 – 7:00 PM  
Village Hall – 400 Park Ave., River Forest, IL

You may submit your written public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: [sjansen@vrf.us](mailto:sjansen@vrf.us)  
You may listen to the meeting by participating in a Zoom conference call as follows: dial-in number: 312-626-6799 with meeting ID: 816 4491 8569 or by clicking [here](#). If you would like to speak during public comment, please email [sjansen@vrf.us](mailto:sjansen@vrf.us) by 4:00 PM on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes for December 9, 2025
4. Commissioner Updates
5. Commission Projects
  - a. Bird City Illinois and Migratory Birds
  - b. Native Plants – 2026 Grant Opportunities
6. Communications and Staff Reports
  - a. Quarterly EV Report
  - b. Village Project Updates
  - c. Communications
7. Schedule Next Meeting – February 10, 2026
8. Adjournment

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Sustainability Commission was held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Kadlec, Hoyt, Marti, and Student Commissioner Stierwalt  
Absent: Commissioner Avalos  
Also Present: Staff Liaison Seth Jansen

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

One resident was attending via Zoom and inquired about snow removal. Mr. Jansen explained that was outside of the jurisdiction of the Sustainability Commission and briefly explained Public Works operations with regard to snow and ice removal.

**3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Marti made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kadlec, to approve the meeting minutes from November 11, 2025, with the typo correction identified by Co-Chair Charrette.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Kadlec, Hoyt, and Marti

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Avalos

Motion Passes.

**4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Co-Chair Lennon noted the new state law regarding paint disposal and recycling. Co-Chair Lennon summarized the law and stated that he had drafted a newsletter right up that would be shared in a future newsletter.

Co-Chair Charrette noted that she and Commissioner Hoyt had met with Trinity High School regarding native planting on the school property and a potential rooftop nesting location at the school, relating to the Bird City Illinois efforts of the Commission around the Common Nighthawk. Co-Chair Charrette also noted they met with Adam Kessel of the Trailside Museum regarding the partnership with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County for the Bird City Illinois recognition efforts. Co-Chair Charrette noted they we meet again regarding potential collaborations between the Trailside Musuem and the Commission as part of these efforts.

Student Commissioner Stierwalt attended the Oak Park and River Forest High School Environmental Club meeting and stated the Club expressed interest in volunteering for the nighthawk monitoring project and the EcoShip sorting. The Commission discussed the EcoShip collection drive.

## **5. FOREST PRESERVE PARTNERSHIPS**

Co-Chair Charrette suggested the Commission and the Village could help promote and amplify what the Forest Preserve is doing locally. Commissioner Kadlec suggested promoting Forest Preserve events through the Sustainability page on the Village website. Mr. Jansen noted that the Trailside Museum and Forest Preserve events page is linked on the website. Co-Chair Charrette also noted the Forest Preserve intends to expand the Village's polystyrene food takeout container ban and apply it to all facilities throughout the county, beyond those located within River Forest

## **6. COMMISSION PROJECTS**

Commissioner Marti outlined the process and timeframe for applying for the Bird City Designation. Commissioner Marti had created a chart timing out the various tasks and actions that need to be undertaken throughout the process. Commissioner Marti outlined the chart he had created to outline the actions and timeframe that will serve as a roadmap to earning the Bird City designation. The Commission discussed the layout of the chart and deadlines established in the chart. Co-Chair Charrette suggested that some actions may already be completed and documentation may be all that is needed. Co-Chair Lennon inquired about what requires Board approval and if anything needs to be approved by the Board prior to the Commission taking actions. Commissioner Hoyt suggested incorporating a Lights Out commitment from the Village; Mr. Jansen explained how this would require a resolution, rather than a proclamation similar to what Oak Park had passed.

Co-Chair Charrette noted that the Commission will be ten years old and suggested putting together something to recognize all the work the Commission has done over the past decade.

The Commission discussed putting together information on the Lights Out campaign, using Village communications to promote it to residents, and contacting larger institutions directly to see if they would be willing to voluntarily participate in the program. Co-Chair Lennon suggested adding outreach to the various institutions as part of the action items listed in the planning chart. Commissioner Hoyt discussed Trinity High Schools roof as a potential bird habitat and discussed other types of roofing styles and materials that are and are not suitable for rooftop nesting. Commissioner Hoyt also met with the Science Department Chair at Triton College about a potential opportunity for Triton to assist with monitoring birds as part of the project. Co-Chair Charrette and Commissioner Marti indicated they would contact each other directly regarding Bird City actions already achieved by the Community

Commissioner Hoyt discussed potential locations for the native planting project. The Commission agreed that the Hawthorne Ave. planting site and Central Ave. butterfly garden could serve as good small locations to start and gradually build from. The Commission also discussed incorporating native planting into the Village lots across from Village Hall along Park Ave. In discussing the Park Ave. locations, the Commission noted this location could

serve as an educational planting site with plant identifiers incorporated and serve as a portion of a town park with benches, tables, and walking paths as well. Co-Chair Lennon noted the value of the education component of the native planting and garden sites. The Commission discussed volunteer opportunities in developing and maintaining the site. The Commission discussed the Hawthorne planting site and jurisdictions of the railroad and the Village right-of-way. Co-Chair Lennon requested a status update on the previously listed pollinator and native gardens under the jurisdiction of the Village. Commissioner Kadlec suggested that an updated list could help the Village and Commission identify which locations need attention. Co-Chair Charrette had suggested an updated inventory of parkway pollinator gardens that the Village had previously installed.

## **7. COMMUNICATIONS AND STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Jansen outlined the upcoming planned newsletter and social media communications and general communications plan to promote the composting and community solar programs when there are not specific events or deadlines to share. Mr. Jansen provided updates on the Electric Vehicle Charging Station project, the Rooftop Solar project at the Public Works Garage, and the Permeable Paver project for the Village Hall parking lot

## **8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – JANUARY 13, 2026**

The Commission reached a consensus to hold its next meeting Tuesday, January 13, 2026

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Co-Chair Charrette made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Marti, to adjourn the meeting at 8:01PM.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Co-Chair Charrette, Co-Chair Lennon, Commissioners Kadlec, Hoyt, and Marti

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Avalos

Motion Passes.

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Seth Jansen, Secretary



**Village of River Forest  
Public Works and Engineering**

400 Park Avenue  
River Forest, IL 60305  
Tel: 708-366-8500

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 13, 2026

To: Sustainability Commission

From: Seth Jansen, Assistant to the Director of Public Works

Subj: Bird City Application Memo

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The attached document is the successful Bird City Illinois application submitted by the Town of Normal, which Normal has shared with Commissioner Hoyt. The application is for the awareness of the Commission and will serve as a helpful basis for comparison when developing the Village's application.

The Bird City Project Plan Chart is also reattached for Commission reference.

**Attachment:**

- Normal, IL Bird City Illinois Application
- Bird City Project Plan Chart

# **Bird City Illinois Application**

**Normal, Illinois**

**May 2025**

## **Introduction**

The Town has a long history of environmental stewardship, reinforced most recently by the adoption of a new Sustainability Plan in 2024. In addition, the Town has worked closely with the local Audubon Chapter – the Grand Prairie Bird Alliance – for the past four years to enhance bird habitat and to encourage bird appreciation in our community. These efforts make the Town a strong candidate for Bird City Illinois designation.

## **Requirements for Bird City Illinois designation:**

### **1. Action 3.7.1, Category 3 – Bird City Illinois Resolution**

The attached resolution (Attachment 1) was approved by the Town Council on May 19, 2025.

### **2. Minimum of 3 actions from Category 1 (Habitat)**

*Sec. 1. 1. 4 - Demonstrate that your community understands the critical ecological role of pollinators by documenting your Bee City USA status or by describing another substantial effort to promote pollinator health such as participating in the Illinois Monarch project.*

The Town has been a participant in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge since 2021. As part of this program, we must annually submit a report to show that we are meeting or exceeding the program guidelines. Our most recent annual report is attached (Attachment 2). The 2024 report includes the bird-centered natural area restoration at the Allers Shelter.

*Sec. 1. 1. 5 - Demonstrate that your community has been awarded Tree City USA status by the National Arbor Day Foundation.*

The Town has been awarded Tree City USA status since 1999. Attachment 3 is an email dated March 25, 2025, showing our most recent designation by the Arbor Day Foundation.

*Sec. 1.2.1 - Document a recent project that created or restored bird habitat in your community. How many acres or square footage did that include?*

Based on a design provided by the Grand Prairie Bird Alliance (formerly the John Wesley Powell Audubon Society), State Farm Insurance awarded the Town of Normal a \$75,000 grant to build a bird-friendly habitat adjacent to the most well-traveled part of the Constitution Trail, a local rails-to-trails multiuse path that traverses more than 40 miles throughout Normal and Bloomington. The bird habitat is adjacent to a pavilion with seating. The habitat includes a rock-lined, manufactured stream that ends in a small pond.

The immediate area will be planted entirely with native grasses, flowers, and shrubs, and there is a plan to extend the native plantings throughout the remaining land adjacent to this part of the trail. The project currently covers approximately 6,000 sq. ft. but could be expanded to encompass approximately an acre.

Attachment 4 contains photos of the water feature and the initial native plantings. The rest of the native plants will be installed this spring.

In the past 10 years, the Town has taken significant steps to restore native habitat along long stretches of Sugar Creek, particularly as it makes its way through our public parks. We use a third-party contractor to conduct prescribed burns and to minimize the return of invasive species.

*Sec. 1.6.1 - Document the establishment of a program to promote the conservation of a specific species of birds such as Purple Martins, Chimney Swifts, Peregrine Falcons, or American Kestrels through public education, preservation of nesting locations or constructing nest sites.*

The Grand Prairie Bird Alliance recently installed a purple martin nest box at the Illinois State University Horticulture Center in north Normal, and the Town will host a purple martin nest box at its newest first station (adjacent to a public pond) upon its completion later in 2025.

### **3. Category 2 (Threats to Birds)**

Although the Town does not have an official policy, the newest fire station (currently under construction) has been designed with a landscaping plan that greatly exceeds zoning code requirements and that includes almost entirely native species. It will be the Town's first building to be built with all bird-friendly glass, including on the large truck bay doors.

4. Both actions from 3.1 (World Migratory Bird Day)

*Action 3.1 Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day – Proclamation (Attachment 5)*

*Action 3.1.2 Host a World Migratory Bird Day event*

The Town held an art-themed event with a World Migratory Bird Day theme on Saturday, May 24 from 10 a.m. until noon at the Illinois Art Station. The event was free for the public and attended by approximately 50 people, more than half of whom were children under 10. The event included the following:

- Using paracord and recycled CDs to create bird/window collision deterrents (and teaching the kids why this is important)
- Coloring a WMBD banner
- Learning how to use Merlin
- Learning how to use binoculars
- Seeing bird migration patterns on the MOTUS website
- Taking a bird walk on the IAS grounds

Several people joined the Bird Alliance and/or our Facebook group after the event, and one parent commented that her daughter is now super-excited to go on upcoming bird walks.

5. At least 3 more actions from any category

*Education and Engagement*

*3 . 2 . 3 - Demonstrate that your community actively raises awareness of its bird assets. Examples include placing a remote web camera on a nest platform, offering regular, public bird watching field trips, promoting Important Bird Areas (IBAs), birding hotspots, birding trails and phenomena (e.g., raptor, waterfowl, or songbird migration, congregating), in your area and/or creating a significant educational resource on your community's bird life.*

The Grand Prairie Bird Alliance has been in existence for more than 50 years and has for many years held regular bird walks during spring and fall migration. The Alliance began offering many of these walks at Hidden Creek Nature Preserve in Normal after the Town undertook significant natural area restoration work within the park. It is now one of the hottest eBird “hot spots” in the community, with more than 149 bird species identified by 123 birdwatchers. The eBird site shows that 674 birdwatching checklists have been submitted into the system, which puts Hidden Creek in the top 10 birdwatching locations in the eBird region. Additional eBird hot spots in Normal include Heartland

Community College, the Constitution Trail, Ironwood Pond east, Underwood Park, and the new natural play park at Colene Hoose Elementary School.

The Town also posts bird-related content to its social media channels to celebrate birds migrating through the community, and the Town hosts two bird walks in local parks during July's National Parks and Recreation Month. See Attachment 6.

*3.4.5 - Develop one or more accessible nature / birding sites for visitors regardless of physical abilities.*

The new bird feature adjacent to the Constitution Trail is fully accessible to those with mobility limitations. The trail itself is a paved surface, and there is a paved surface from the trail's edge to the Allers shelter, which provides a covered area to bird watch. Portions of Hidden Creek Nature Preserve are also accessible, with paved and fairly flat, compacted gravel trails. This park is ideal for people with some mobility limitations, as the parking is nearby, the trails are short, and there are benches scattered throughout. Heartland Community College recently received grant funds from COUNTRY Financial to enhance their existing detention pond and prairie planting with new bird blinds, one of which will be fully accessible.

*3.5.3 - Illustrate a program that involves schools, garden clubs, or other organizations in bird conservation activities.*

The Town annually partners with the Grand Prairie Bird Alliance to host bird walks at two of its parks during July's National Parks and Recreation Month. The events are advertised in a summer program guide that reaches thousands of households, as shown in the attached portion of the Summer Activity Guide. These bird walks are also promoted via social media. As a result of this partnership, many new people have found places to birdwatch in Normal. The Town also worked closely with the Bird Alliance on the design of the bird-friendly water feature adjacent to the Constitution Trail to ensure appropriate plantings and placement of rocks to provide cover.

*3.6.2 - Demonstrate that your community is represented in at least one citizen science bird monitoring program (e.g., the Christmas Bird Count, Midwest Crane Count, Climate Watch, Great Backyard Bird Count, Swift Night Out, Audubon Climate Watch, D-Bird, Globe at Night, Nestwatch, FeederWatch, Hummingbirds at Home, the Big Sit, Marsh Monitoring, Global Bird Rescue, or other actively coordinated community science project).*

The Grand Prairie Bird Alliance first started hosting a Christmas Bird Count in 1976. Although the records are unclear as to how many years the event was held, our current coordinator – Dr. Angelo Capparella – says it would be accurate to say that we have

done one almost every year since the start. In more recent years, the Alliance has also held a Spring Bird Count. The counts include locations in Normal.

### *Sustainability*

*4 . 2 . 1 - Document an energy audit for municipal building(s) and show that your community is working to implement its recommendations.*

In 2023 the Facilities and Energy Management Department began pursuing the ISO 14001 certification process to better align with the organization's values and commitment focusing on sustainability. The process was solely related to the Facilities Management maintenance building and the various operations performed from that location. During the process, several items were identified to be improved including electricity usage, natural gas consumption, and water usage.

The recommendation to improve electricity usage was to install occupancy sensors within all spaces of the facility. This was completed in the regularly trafficked areas such as the main office, breakroom and shop. The recommendation for improving our natural gas usage was the installation of programmable thermostats. Lastly, it was recommended to replace all plumbing fixtures with the water-conserving type. This is currently in process as staff work to repair/replace these fixtures as their components begin to fail.

Attachment 7 is the executive summary portion of the facility conditions assessment.

*4 . 2 . 3 - Demonstrate that your community participates in a community solar program or that a municipal building receives a significant percentage of its electricity from renewable energy.*

The Town has for many years purchased a certain amount of green energy. Attachment 8, entitled "MISO System-Wide Generation Fuel Mix," shows that 18% of the Town's energy purchased in the past 12 months has been from renewable sources.

*4 . 3 . 3 - Show that your community goes above and beyond in its support for, and implementation of, green transportation (e.g., bike trails, rideshare programs, bike trails/lanes, etc.). Be sure to utilize the narrative to illustrate why your community is exceptional because standard practice will not receive credit.*

The Town's commitment to exceptional green transportation is demonstrated by its third consecutive, 4-year designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists, as shown on Attachment 9, our most recent Bike Friendly Community Report Card.

In addition, the Town's adoption of a Complete Streets ordinance in 2016 has required an annual report on all transportation improvements for all non-vehicular transportation. Thus, the Town has documented an incredible amount of projects, safety initiatives, and events that make the community more welcoming to those using alternative transportation. Highlights include the following:

1. An 20-mile off-road trail system called the Constitution Trail. The original portions of the Constitution Trail system were built on an abandoned, tree-lined railroad right-of-way, so it also serves as a natural corridor for migrating birds and other wildlife. The Town has steadily added to its original 2.5 miles over the years.
2. An annual budget to repair, replace, and build new sidewalks to ensure walking access throughout the community.
3. Almost 3 miles of bike lanes and 10 miles of other types of on-street bike facilities.
4. Code-required bicycle parking for new construction.
5. E-bikes provide to Town of Normal planners and building inspectors to ride for business purposes.
6. Local taxpayer support for the local transit system, which is not a taxing authority. Rather, the Town and its sister city Bloomington choose to support the public bus system with general fund dollars. The Town also provides free bus fare for any Town employees who choose to use the system.
7. Successful bids for "Safe Routes to School" grants and "Illinois Transportation Enhancement" grants to make various pedestrian and bicycle improvements such as trail extensions, "road diets," and street crossing enhancements.
8. Many Town-sponsored events to encourage bike riding and other non-vehicular transportation such as an annual bike light giveaway and bike safety event, annual bike rodeos for children, and bike-to-school and walk-to-school days.
9. Partnership with Ride Illinois in 2024 to host a training for "League Certified Instructors," who will provide high-quality bike education and safety events in the community.
10. Cooperation with local governmental partners and Illinois State University on various safety-related initiatives such as the "Go:Safe" campaign, which is a "Vision Zero" program.

*4.3.4 - Document recognition or certification of an energy efficient municipal building (LEED certified silver or higher or comparable).*

Attachment 10 demonstrates that the Town has two LEED-certified buildings – the Children's Discovery Museum and Uptown Station.

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Questions? Contact Mercy Davison, Director of Planning & Zoning, at (309) 454-9590 or [mdavison@normalil.gov](mailto:mdavison@normalil.gov).

# Project Planning for Obtaining the Bird City Designation for River Forest

## River Forest Sustainability Commission Project: Obtain Bird City Designation

CATEGORY	TASK	Project Start	11/1/25	12/31/26		columns used to create the chart						
		START	END	COLO	Start	Blue	Red	Gre	Br	Ora	Pur	
<b>Select Actions to Pursue</b>	Review BC Application	11/15/25	12/1/25	Blue	11/15/25	17	0	0	0	0	0	
	Select Actions	11/17/25	12/10/25	Blue	11/17/25	24	0	0	0	0	0	
	Create Plan Document	11/20/25	12/15/25	Blue	11/20/25	26	0	0	0	0	0	
	Monitor Progress	11/15/25	12/31/26	Blue	11/15/25	412	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Village Proclamation - 3.1.1</b>	Draft Document	2/1/26	2/15/26	Red	2/1/26	0	15	0	0	0	0	
	Send to Village Board	2/15/26	2/15/26	Red	2/15/26	0	1	0	0	0	0	
	Approve Proclamation	2/15/26	3/15/26	Red	2/15/26	0	29	0	0	0	0	
	Publish Proclamation	4/1/26	4/15/26	Red	4/1/26	0	15	0	0	0	0	
<b>Village Resolution - 3.7.1</b>	Draft Document	6/1/26	6/15/26	Green	6/1/26	0	0	15	0	0	0	
	Send to Village Board	6/15/26	6/15/26	Green	6/15/26	0	0	1	0	0	0	
	Approve Proclamation	6/16/26	7/15/26	Green	6/16/26	0	0	30	0	0	0	
	Publish Proclamation	7/17/26	8/1/26	Green	7/17/26	0	0	16	0	0	0	
<b>Host WMBD Event - 3.1.2</b>	Event Planning	1/1/26	3/31/26	Brown	1/1/26	0	0	0	90	0	0	
	Staging/Production	4/1/26	4/30/26	Brown	4/1/26	0	0	0	30	0	0	
	Hold Event	5/9/26	5/9/26	Brown	5/9/26	0	0	0	1	0	0	
<b>Nighthawk Project - 3.5.1</b>	Establish Partners	1/1/26	4/1/26	Orange	1/1/26	0	0	0	0	91	0	
	Designate Nest Areas	2/1/26	3/1/26	Orange	2/1/26	0	0	0	0	29	0	
	Monitor Nighthawks	3/30/26	11/1/26	Orange	3/30/26	0	0	0	0	217	0	
<b>Lights Out RF Program - 2.3.3</b>	Develop Documentation	2/1/26	3/1/26	Purple	2/1/26	0	0	0	0	0	29	
	Obtain Board Approval	3/1/26	3/15/26	Purple	3/1/26	0	0	0	0	0	15	
	Publish/Train Clientele	1/1/26	11/1/26	Purple	1/1/26	0	0	0	0	0	305	
<b>Restore Bird Habitat - 1.2.1</b>	Discuss with Trustee(s)	12/5/25	3/1/26	Green	12/5/25	0	0	87	0	0	0	
	Obtain Grant Funding	1/13/26	1/31/26	Green	1/13/26	0	0	19	0	0	0	
	Obtain Board Approval	3/1/26	3/30/26	Green	3/1/26	0	0	30	0	0	0	
	Select/Plan Property	1/31/26	4/1/26	Green	1/31/26	0	0	61	0	0	0	
	Construct Habitat	5/1/26	10/1/26	Green	5/1/26	0	0	154	0	0	0	
<b>Obtain Tree City Designation - 1.1.5</b>	Complete											
<b>Public Demonstration Garden - 1.2.2</b>	Complete											
<b>Community Solar Program - 4.2.3</b>	Complete											

Individual actions

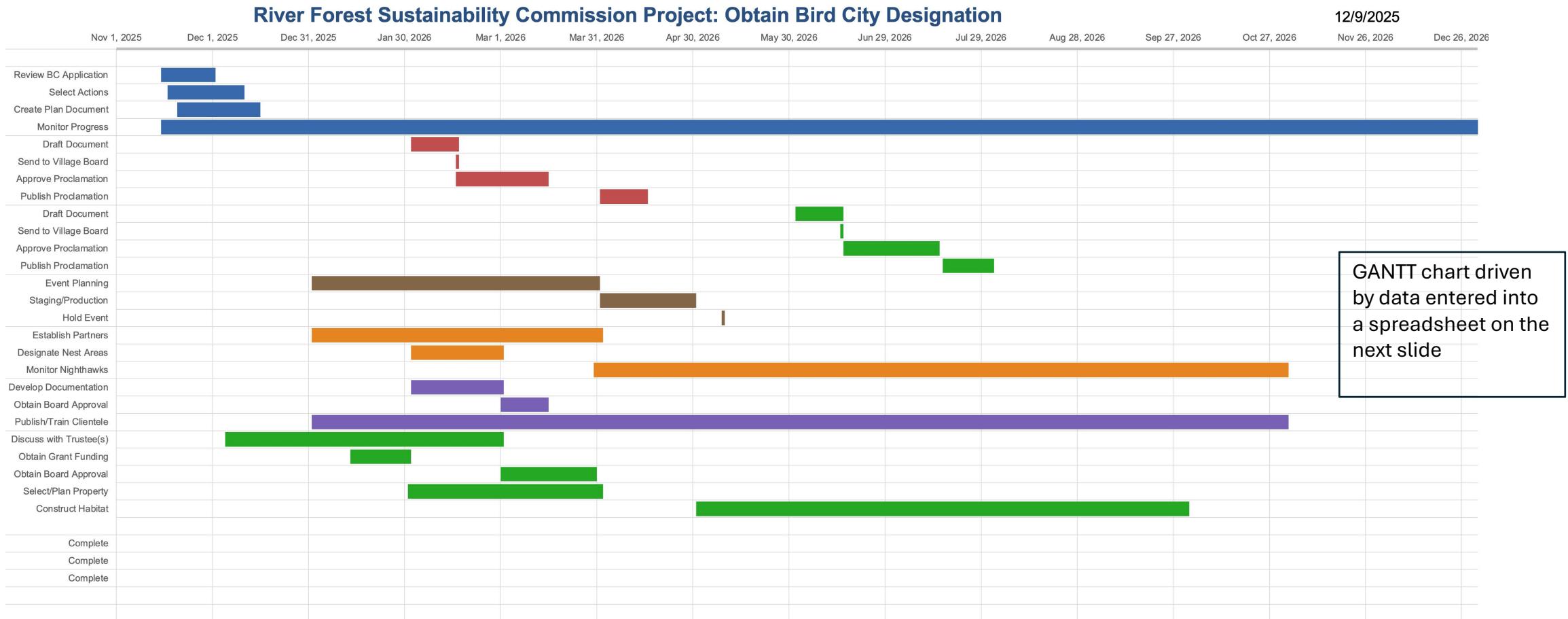
Start and end dates

Dependencies

Elapsed time

# Project Planning for Obtaining the Bird City Designation for River Forest

We will use a project plan to manage and track the requirements, timing, and dependencies required to achieve the Bird City designation for River Forest





**Village of River Forest  
Public Works and Engineering**

400 Park Avenue  
River Forest, IL 60305  
Tel: 708-366-8500

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 13, 2026  
To: Sustainability Commission  
From: Seth Jansen, Assistant to the Director of Public Works  
Subj: Native Planting Grants

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In seeking funds for native planting projects on Village property, two potential grants have been identified to help offset some of the cost of the project: the Missouri Prairie Foundation's Prairie Garden Grants Program and the Openlands ComEd Green Region Grant.

The Missouri Prairie Foundation's grant is available to entities in Missouri and immediately surrounding states, including Illinois. The Grant is an \$800 grant which can be used to purchase native seeds or native plants for new or existing public gardens. Plants purchased with grant funds must be species native to the lower Midwest. The grant deadline is January 23<sup>rd</sup> with the funds being awarded in March of 2026. The guidelines and application are both attached for the awareness of the Commissioners.

The Openlands/ComEd grant is a larger grant of up to \$10,000. The grant requires at least a 50% match, meaning, if \$10,000 is awarded, the grant recipient must contribute an additional \$5000 of other funds toward the project. The grant details and application are not fully available at the time of distribution of the Commission meeting packet, but will be available prior to the Commission meeting and shared separately with the Commission. The grant period opens on January 12<sup>th</sup>, and the grant deadline is March 13<sup>th</sup>. The grant is specifically focused on pollinator conservation and climate resilience. The program is available to non-profits and taxing bodies in the ComEd service territory in northern Illinois.

**Attachment:**

- Missouri Prairie Foundation Grant Guidelines
- Missouri Prairie Foundation Grant Application

Grants Program. In 2026, MPF would like to award several grants to help fund the establishment or improvement of public prairie gardens or plantings using Midwest native plants. Grants will not exceed \$800 each. Those with smaller projects are encouraged to apply as well. Matching funds are not required, but proposals with secured matching funds may be evaluated higher than others.

Please see application guidelines below and use [this Google Forms application](#) to apply. A PDF of the application can be viewed [here](#). Letters of support are welcome. Please email MPF Conservation Program Associate Lilly Germeroth at [lilly@moprairie.org](mailto:lilly@moprairie.org) with questions or if you encounter any technical difficulties.

### **Applications are due January 23, 2026.**

Note: The online application form linked above is the preferred method of submitting an application as it allows uploading of supplemental materials along with the application. This requires logging into a freely available Google account before completing the form; if you are unable to login to a Google account before completing the form, please email [lilly@moprairie.org](mailto:lilly@moprairie.org) to make alternate arrangements for submitting your application.

#### **Application Guidelines:**

Gardens must be available to the public and must incorporate native prairie species.

Grant funds must be used to establish a new native garden or to improve an existing garden. Gardens can be formal or informal. Grant funds can be used to purchase native seeds or native plants.

**Plants purchased with grant funds must be species native to the lower Midwest.** They can include sedges, grasses, wildflowers, trees, shrubs, or vines.

**Grant funds may not be used to purchase cultivars or nativars.** If you are unfamiliar with these terms, learn about them [here](#), or contact the Missouri Prairie Foundation at [info@moprairie.org](mailto:info@moprairie.org) for guidance.

**Grant funds may not be used to purchase fertilizer or plastic/non-biodegradable weed barriers** (newspapers make a great weed barrier and decompose over time).

**Before preparing a proposal, become familiar with the links under “Learn more about native gardens from Grow Native!” on this page.** You may also wish to consult the Grow Native! [native garden plans](#) and the [Native Plant Database](#) for information and inspiration.

Proposals must address how the garden will be shared and promoted to the surrounding community.

Grant applications are rated based on six categories: Location, Need, and Purpose (25%), Garden Description and Design (20%), Time Frame (15%), Public Exposure and Interpretation (10%), Maintenance Plan (15%), and Budget (15%).

**A brief update with photos is requested 6 months after the grant is awarded, and a full report with photos is required by May of the following year.**

Organization Name \*

Your answer

Type of Organization \*

- Non-profit
- Business
- School
- Government office/agency
- Community or civic group
- Other:

Organization Location (city and state) \*

Your answer

Year Founded \*

Your answer

Organization Website \*

Your answer



Contact Name \*

Your answer

Contact Title/Role \*

Your answer

Contact Email \*

Your answer

Contact Phone Number \*

Your answer

Type of Prairie Garden \*

- New garden or planting
- Addition to existing garden or planting
- Renovation of existing garden or planting

Garden Site Location - general (city and state) \*

Your answer



Garden Site Location - precisely (street address or other location information, like \* coordinates)

Your answer

Garden Site Location - describe immediate surroundings \*

Your answer

Has your organization received a Prairie Garden Grant from the Missouri Prairie Foundation in the past? \*

Yes

No

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**Village of River Forest  
Public Works and Engineering**

400 Park Avenue  
River Forest, IL 60305  
Tel: 708-366-8500

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 13, 2026

To: Sustainability Commission

From: Seth Jansen, Assistant to the Director of Public Works

Subj: Quarterly Charging Station and Electric Vehicle Report

The below and attached report provides the following Charging and Electric Vehicle Metrics for Quarter 4: October through December 2025:

- EVs and hybrid vehicles registered within the Village
- EV charging station installation permits during the reporting quarter
- Usage data for the Village-owned EVCS, including:
  - o Number of charging sessions
  - o Number of unique users
  - o Length of charging sessions histogram

To provide a comprehensive picture of usage over the course of the year, two additional charts are attached, one is a histogram for the length of charging sessions for the entire year and the other is a chart measure the cumulative and monthly kilowatt hour energy usage for the calendar year. With implementation of the new fee structure, energy usage in the last three months of the year was higher than all but two prior months. This illustrates that, while total number of charging sessions may be down, the overall charging usage of the stations is up.

**River Forest Vehicle Registration**

	12/25	12/24	12/23
Electric Vehicles	367	311	227
Hybrid Vehicles	795	667	565

**Electric Vehicle Charging Station Installation Permits - By Quarter**

Q1	1
Q2	3
Q3	3
Q4	2

**2025 Quarterly Metrics**

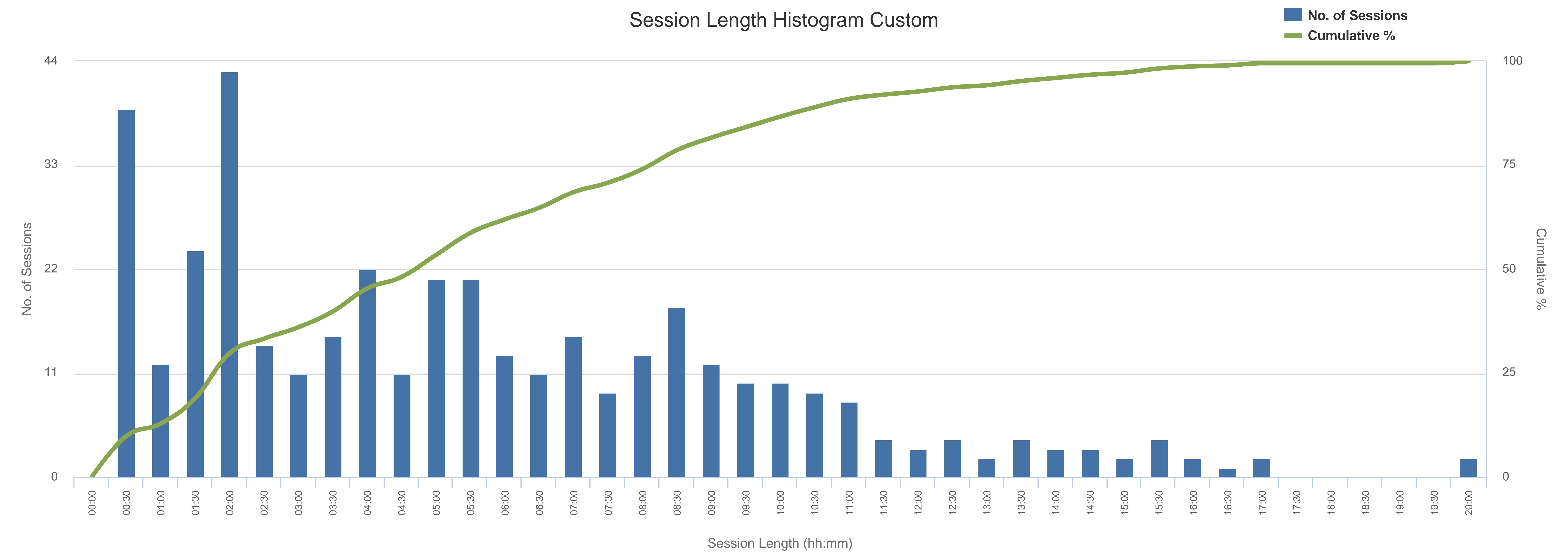
Quarter	Sessions	Unique Drivers
Q1	761	67
Q2	730	89
Q3	866	78
Q4	397	78

## 2025 Monthly Metrics

Month	Sessions	Unique Drivers
January	293	37
February	236	39
March	232	42
April	221	51
May	262	43
June	247	54
July	303	48
August	321	44
September	242	46
October	146	43
November	132	38
December	119	32

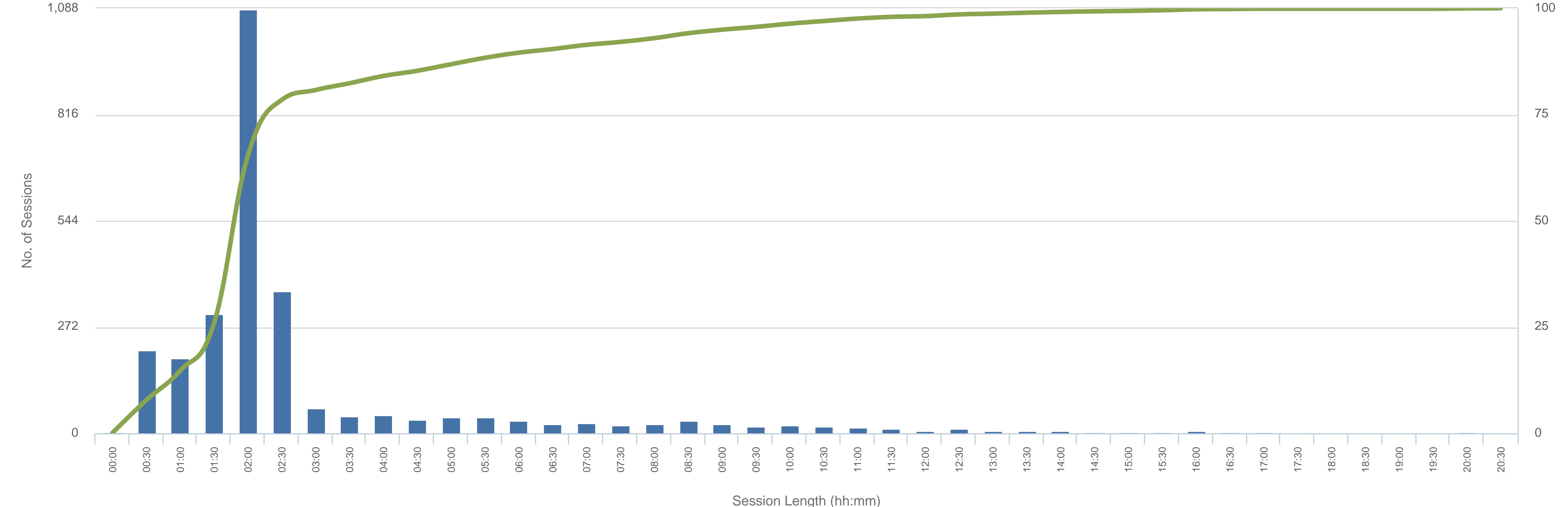
### Attachment:

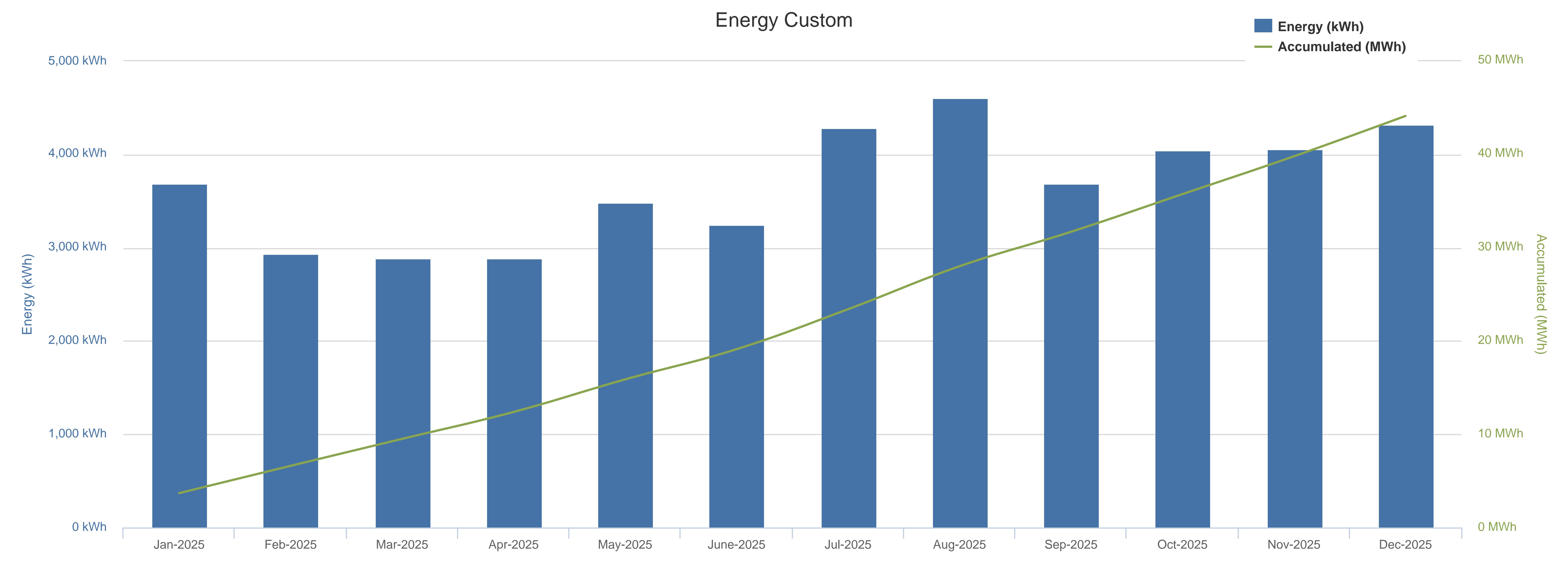
- Charging Session Length Histogram: October-December
- Charging Session Length Histogram: Calendar Year 2025
- Monthly and Cumulative Energy usage: Calendar Year 2025



# Session Length Histogram Custom

No. of Sessions  
Cumulative %







**Village of River Forest  
Public Works and Engineering**

400 Park Avenue  
River Forest, IL 60305  
Tel: 708-366-8500

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 13, 2026

To: Sustainability Commission

From: Seth Jansen, Assistant to the Director of Public Works

Subj: Year in Review

A shortened version of the below "Year in Review" summary was included in the most recent Weekly Newsletter, highlighting some of the accomplishments of the Sustainability Commission in 2025.

**2025 Sustainability Year in Review**

The River Forest Sustainability Commission would like to recognize several of the actions taken by the Village in 2025 to move the community in a more sustainable direction.

This year, the Village Board adopted two major ordinances based on recommendations made by the Sustainability Commission. The first will gradually phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers within the Village, beginning with a season ban in 2026. The second, based on a recommendation from the 2024 University of Illinois Chicago Climate Action Plans, will help protect old growth Oak and Elm trees through the Village by expanding the existing Tree Preservation Ordinance.

In 2025, the Village began construction on the expansion of public electric vehicle charging stations in the Village. This Spring, the River Forest Police Department added their first electric vehicle to the Village fleet. The Village's robust forestry program saw 130 new trees planted in Village parkways in 2025. The Village's focus on sustainability will continue into 2026, including the continued expansion of public EV charging stations, installation of the rooftop solar panels at the Public Works Garage, and reconstruction of the Village Hall parking lot with permeable pavers.

The Sustainability Commission continued its work providing programs and resources for residents. This includes the EcoShip collection drives in April and December. Through this program, residents donate packaging material for reuse by small businesses in the Chicagoland region, preventing unnecessary landfill waste and promoting sustainable practices. The Commission also participated in the National Wildlife Foundation's Mayors Monarch Pledge joining hundreds of other communities across the country to take action to help save the monarch butterfly. This effort included an official Pollinator Week Proclamation by the Village and a new [resource guide](#) on the Village website to help residents create native pollinator gardens. The Commission also developed a [Sustainability Scorecard](#) as a new way to encourage residents to adopt sustainable actions.

The Commission is also encouraging residents to take advantage of sustainability programs available to them through the Village. Residents can sign up for [Community Solar](#) and save on their ComEd bill by earning credits from an off-site solar farm they are subscribing to. Residents can divert food waste from the landfill by subscribing to the [Curbside Composting](#) program, which allows you to split the cost of a cart with a neighbor. You can also take advantage of the compost drop-off sites located in front of Village Hall, the Public Works Garage, and the Water Pumping Station.