



# 2018 Community Sustainability Report Card





# PlanItGreen

## Enhancing Quality of Life

A recent landmark report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change paints a far more dire picture of the immediate consequences of climate change than previously thought, describing a world of worsening food shortages and wildfires, and a mass die-off of coral reefs as soon as 2040 — a period well within the lifetime of much of the global population. The authors found that if greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current rate, the atmosphere will warm up by as much as 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.5 degrees Celsius) above preindustrial levels by 2040, inundating coastlines and intensifying droughts and poverty with estimated damage of \$54 trillion. To prevent 2.7 degrees of warming, the report said, greenhouse pollution must be reduced by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, and 100 percent by 2050. It also found that, by 2050, use of coal as an electricity source would have to drop from nearly 40 percent today to between 1 and 7 percent. Renewable energy such as wind and solar, which make up about 20 percent of the electricity mix today, would have to increase to as much as 67 percent. According to NASA's Global Climate Change project, climate change in the Midwest in particular threatens to bring "extreme heat, heavy downpours and flooding that will affect infrastructure, health, agriculture, forestry, transportation, air and water quality, and more. Climate change will also exacerbate a range of risks to the Great Lakes."

*"It is against this backdrop that PlanItGreen is working. More now than ever, federal backsliding and all-out refutation of climate change by our current president will require local communities to take action. Ultimately, solutions to climate change must happen "on-the-ground" and include local stakeholders: the municipalities, universities, hospitals, school districts, park districts, faith-based congregations, community organizations, businesses and citizens who will experience the impact of climate change in their communities if nothing is done. The time is now. This is your invitation to get involved."*

*Gary Cuneen, Founder and Executive Director, Seven Generations Ahead;  
Project Facilitator, PlanItGreen*

# PlanItGreen

## Project Background

PlanItGreen is a sustainability planning and implementation project that grew out of the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation's Communityworks initiative, designed to enhance the vibrancy and quality of life of Oak Park and River Forest. PlanItGreen is guided by the OPRF Community Foundation's Communityworks Advisory Board and the PlanItGreen Core Team, and is led by non-profit organization Seven Generations Ahead. The project is the collective work of many community organizations, external partners, residents, businesses, and institutions. The plan supports the interests of leaders in engaging all levels of community to reduce their environmental footprint and advance common sustainability objectives.

The Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest – completed in 2011 as the metro area's only two-community plan – completed its 7th year of implementation in 2018, focusing on strategies in each of nine sustainability topic areas including energy, waste, transportation, water, food, education, community development, open space and ecosystems, and economic development. The project conducts an annual Institutional Leaders Forum, drives multiple projects, and engages all major taxing bodies, institutions and sectors in implementation. This 2018 Report Card represents the project's fourth comprehensive report card to date.

*"I am inspired by our community's broad and vibrant engagement in environmental sustainability! We must give thanks to our institutional, business, and community leaders for developing and supporting a range of innovative programs. From healing gardens in our hospitals, to energy efficiency in our park districts, congregations, and other local institutions, to creative climate change radio shows developed by high school teens, our community is succeeding in prioritizing environmental sustainability. The PlanItGreen Report Card provides an effective way to measure these successes, and to focus our efforts toward a common set of ambitious goals. Together, we will pursue a robust, environmentally conscious community that ensures all will live well now, and into the future."*

**Antonio Martinez, Jr., President and CEO**  
Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation

# Desired Outcomes

Thinking generations into the future, the communities of Oak Park and River Forest are committed to sustainability and will strive to achieve the following outcomes:

Communities that reduce consumption of our precious global water resources, and find ways to harvest rainwater and reuse water for all non-potable water needs.

Communities that shift from a paradigm of "waste management" to one of "materials recovery", and that ultimately produce zero waste.

Communities that support all businesses to thrive through reducing costs and environmental footprints, and that become a magnet for new businesses providing sustainable products and services that support sustainability within and beyond our borders.

Communities that successfully transition to a renewable energy economy, significantly reducing the impacts of global climate change.

Communities that are socially, economically and environmentally connected and thriving, and that enjoy a good quality of life for all residents while consuming in such a way as to ensure the ability of all future generations to have the same resources, opportunities, and quality of life.

Communities whose educational institutions integrate sustainability into every day learning, and whose children and adults experience sustainability as the new normal.

Communities that make all decisions through the lens of sustainability, incorporating environmental enhancement, economic development, social equity, and quality of life.

Communities that plan and act to adapt to the reality of climate change, and prepare for climate-related events.

Communities that are easy to navigate by foot, bike and public transit, and utilize non-polluting and non-greenhouse gas emitting vehicles toward restoring our climate's natural balance.

Communities that source the majority of our food needs from local, sustainable and organic growers, increasing the health and well-being of our population and supporting local farmers, local community businesses, and the preservation of our ecosystems.

Communities that support diverse ecosystems with ample open space, abundant native flora, fauna, and pollinators, and use materials that pose zero threats to the health of our community members and ecosystems.

# What is the Community Sustainability Report Card?

The Oak Park River Forest Community Sustainability Report Card provides a snapshot in time of progress against sustainability goals that were created over a ten-month community engagement process in 2010-2011. Baseline metrics – dating back to 2007 – were created and are being used as a basis of comparison to 2018 data that has been aggregated around energy and water consumption, waste reduction, and transportation. The report also includes activity highlights over the past year related to each of the plan's nine topic areas and goals to provide the communities of Oak Park and River Forest with sample strategies and activities in the plan that are currently being implemented. Over time, the sustainability report card will illuminate trends, highlight successes and shortcomings, and ultimately help support decisions on future policies, strategies, and resource allocation that will drive achievement of the 10-year plan's goals.

*“PlanItGreen is the only multi-community sustainability plan in the Chicago metro area. With international and national bodies beset by indecision and inaction, local initiatives bringing together disparate communities seem to be our best, and perhaps only, hope for charting a productive and responsible path forward. We, the residents of Oak Park and River Forest, together with our elected leaders and governing bodies, our major institutions, our community organizations, our businesses, and our faith-based congregations, have come together to collectively pursue clearly articulated goals that help define and achieve a more environmentally sustainable future. With this report card, we have employed the universally understood A to F grading system, in order to cut through the noise and to provide ourselves and everyone with a clear picture of how well (and in some cases how poorly) we are actually doing. The Report Card presents a transparent, data-based, top-level picture of our performance, and it highlights some of the important choices facing us – underscoring some situations in which we should stay the course as well as others in which we must change our tactics – in order to achieve our common sustainability goals. I hope that everyone who sees this Report Card will take just a few minutes to review it. If we all can do a little bit, together we can do a lot, and make a real difference going forward.”*

**David Pope, Co-Chair, Communityworks Advisory Board;  
President, Oak Park Residence Corporation/Oak Park Housing Authority**

# Trends & Metrics:

## Quick Glance

The Quick Glance below provides an assessment of our communities' progress in achieving goals within the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest

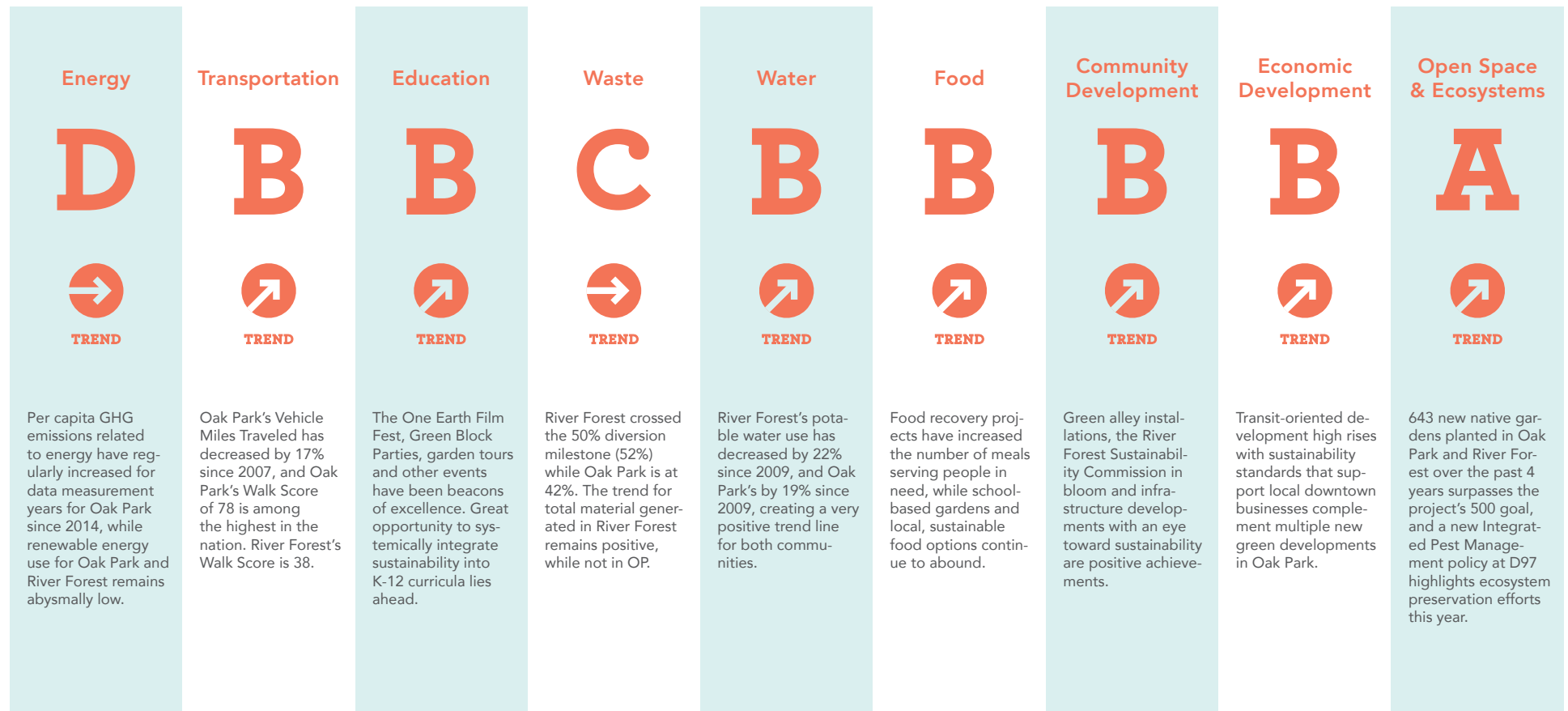
**A: Goals Have Been Exceeded Collectively**

**B: Goals Have Been Met**

**C: Some Goals Have Been Met**

**D: Goals Have Not Been Met**

**F: Goals Have Significantly Not Been Met**



# Not Even Close



## Goals

1. Increase renewable energy procurement 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030 and 75% by 2040.
2. Decrease overall energy use by 2% annually.
3. Reduce GHG emissions to 30% below 2007 levels by 2020, 35% by 2025, and 45% by 2030.
4. Increase solar/renewable energy development and procurement.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that the pace of climate change has accelerated and the consequences of climate change will be much more severe than anticipated if greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current rate. To prevent a possible 2-degree-Celsius temperature increase from pre-industrial levels, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, and 100% by 2050. ComEd's renewable energy portfolio consists of 4% of their energy sources, and both Oak Park and River Forest renewable energy procurement has stagnated at that level for the past 6+ years. A rapid and comprehensive change in policy and practice in our communities will be needed to keep pace with global forecasting. Examples of positive action include Oak Park receiving the SolSmart Gold designation to make it easier for residents to install solar projects, and River Forest is working toward Bronze designation. The Park District of Oak Park has led the way in both communities by increasing energy efficiency through replacing all exterior and interior lights with LED bulbs (saving over 40% on electrical usage throughout the parks and facilities); replacing sports-field lighting at Stevenson Park (saving another \$10,000 annually in energy); and installing 4 solar arrays on different buildings totaling 182 kws. The Park District scored a \$100,000 Sun Club grant for the Oak Park Conservatory which enabled it to

install solar panels, 3 observation beehives, tea composting and a 4,400-gallon rainwater harvesting cistern. The Oak Park Residence Corporation recently signed a 4-year contract to buy 100% renewable energy, making it a leader among Oak Park and River Forest institutions.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Going by the data, the communities of Oak Park and River Forest indisputably have *not* been leaders in the Chicago metro area with respect to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions and renewable energy procurement. Though an increase of heat degree days of 16% over the past two years has contributed to increased energy use, overall GHG emissions reductions are not keeping pace with what is needed to fend off serious climate change consequences in the present and future. With Illinois' Future Energy Jobs Act poised to launch multiple projects across the state that may double Illinois' solar production, our communities have the opportunity to fuel continued solar development by procuring energy linked to these new projects. Both communities – including village governments, taxing bodies, community institutions, businesses and residents – will need to seriously step up planning and action efforts to procure and/or install renewable energy. In May 2019, PlanItGreen is partnering with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to facilitate planning toward 100% renewable electricity. Decisions by the IL Power Agency on Future Energy Jobs Act-funded solar projects will provide Oak Park and River Forest institutions with newly developed options for buying local solar energy. The Village of Oak Park's Sustainability Fund is positioned to support new solar and efficiency projects in Oak Park, while efforts to advance community solar will provide opportunities for all of our institutions to buy solar energy from newly developed projects.

OAK PARK	2007	2012	2014	2016	2018
Therms	34,357,048	28,599,102	31,802,391	33,364,686	36,111,626
kWhs	353,700,838	400,477,682	324,441,404	325,026,738	322,798,951
Renewables % of kWhs	0%	48%	31%	4%	4%
Renewables % of Total Energy	0%	15%	7.5%	1%	.87%
GHG Emissions (metric tons)	432,281	298,895	326,922	397,549	410,601
Per Capita GHG Emissions	8.74	5.74	6.27	7.63	7.86

RIVER FOREST	2007	2012	2014	2016	2018
Therms	8,821,530	7,435,415	8,248,225	8,282,055	9,369,874.44
kWhs	100,998,700	96,843,338	90,786,783	89,907,758	90,654,989*
Renewables % of kWhs	0%	0%	6%	4%	4%
Renewables % of Total Energy	0%	0%	1.5%	1%	1%
GHG Emissions (metric tons)	118,193	107,906	104,080	104,946	111,221
Per Capita GHG Emissions	10.60	9.60	9.23	9.41	9.99

\*ComEd did not supply River Forest data for large commercial industrial electricity use (as part of total community energy use) as it has done in the past, and so 2016 numbers for that category were added to the River Forest 2018 total Kwh use to have an apples-to-apples comparison. Also, street & highway data was only provided for 8 months in 2018, and so we took the average use for the 8 months in that category, multiplied by 4 and added it to the 8 months data we did have to reach the final number for street & highway for River Forest, which was then added to make the comprehensive River Forest Kwh use number.

### Notes to Chart

- Renewable energy data is taken from ComEd Environmental Disclosure Statement.
- GHG refers to greenhouse gas.
- GHG emissions calculations for this year's data and historical data have been adjusted according to the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator (December 2018).
- Oak Park population for 2017 is 52,261, River Forest population is 11,132.

# Madison Street “Complete Street” Moving Forward



## Goals

1. 2% annual increase in public transit ridership.
2. 2% annual decrease in vehicle miles traveled.
3. Increase the number of people biking and walking in Oak Park and River Forest.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Oak Park's Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per household decreased by 6% from 2013 to 2017, and has decreased by 17% since 2007. River Forest's VMT per household decreased by 1% from 2013 to 2017, and has decreased by 3% since 2007. Public transit ridership in both communities decreased (though less than in Chicago). While the public transit trend line is still positive, data shows a national trend in decreased public transit which is attributed to the rise in use of ride sharing services and increasing job flexibility to work from home. Oak Park has a Walk Score of 78 out of 100, ranking it as one of the most walkable communities in the country. River Forest has a walk score of 38 out of 100, indicating it is car dependent and most errands require a vehicle. In 2018, the Village of Oak Park expanded bike transportation infrastructure by adding 0.3 new miles of bike lanes as well as adding five new bike racks and replacing fourteen. However, the village board of Oak Park voted to discontinue the Divvy bike sharing program after two years due to low ridership and high costs. The Madison Street Road Diet Project was approved in November, which will create an opportunity for increased biking and walking connectivity and small business investment in the community. The Lake Street Improvement Project will improve transportation through improving traffic circulation and capacity, enhancing pedestrian

## WALK SCORE

	2016	2018
Oak Park	76	78
River Forest	38	38

and bicycle linkage between retail districts, and replacing aging roadway and utilities. The Sustainability Commission of River Forest is conducting a study on

River Forest streets bike safety, incorporating biking priorities into the Village's Comprehensive Plan, and creating bike paths to connect the Des Plaines River Trail to the Prairie Path.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Oak Park also has a public transit score of 62 and biking score of 65, and with construction on the Madison Street project beginning there should be opportunities to enhance those scores and connect bike lanes on Madison with other streets to create more contiguous bike paths.

There are 30 electric vehicles in River Forest, and as demand for these vehicles increases both communities will need to expand EV charging infrastructure.

## CTA TRAINS GREEN AND BLUE LINES: OAK PARK

	2007	2009	2011	2012	2014	2016	2017
Total Average Weekday	11,843	11,759	13,566	13,919	14,266	13,923	13,796
Entries: Oak Park							
% Change 2016-2017							-0.91%
% Change 2007-2017							16.49%
Total Average Weekday							
Entries: System Wide	456,087	480,188	579,921	602,608	617,564	624,411	608,124
Annual % Change	Baseline	5.28%	20.77%	3.91%	2.48%	1.11%	-2.61%
% Change 2007-2017							33.34%

## Notes to Chart

The historical data has been adjusted according to the current yearly reports from the CTA.

## AVERAGE ANNUAL VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) (PER HOUSEHOLD)

	07-09	09-11	11-13	13-15	15-17	13-17 % Change	07-17 % Change
Chicago	13,994	12,892	11,830	11,914	10,560	-11%	-25%
Oak Park	15,464	14,779	14,175	13,775	12,900	-6%	-17%
River Forest	18,021	17,515	17,529	17,665	17,423	-1%	-3%

## Notes to Chart

The methodology of reporting VMT estimates has been revised to better account for miles traveled by newer vehicles that have not yet been inspected, and also to account for changing numbers of households



# One Earth Film Festival Soars While Systemic Curriculum Integration Remains an Opportunity Ahead



## Goals

1. Sustainable choices by residents, stakeholders, and visitors become commonplace, and a diverse cross section of residents are engaged.
2. Each school integrates 21st century sustainability lessons into curricula and engages students in sustainability projects and learning.
3. Increase student awareness about the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest, and engage students in PlanItGreen.



## HIGHLIGHTS

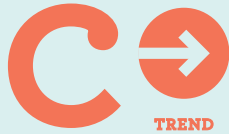
River Forest District 90's three-year sustainability plan includes the installation of 50 hand dryers in bathrooms throughout the three school buildings, instituting student sustainability clubs at each school, and plans to incorporate sustainability into the science curriculum in the 2019-2020 school year with a new science textbook adoption. The district's sustainability clubs have begun working on initiatives such as milk carton and marker recycling, mentorship programs, zero waste lunches, composting, and more. The Children's School joined other PlanItGreen schools on a path to zero waste by adding composting and recycling throughout the school and holding zero waste events. Triton College began the GENIUS Scholarship program in which Triton College students who are interested in majoring in Engineering, Engineering Technology/ Mechatronics, Environmental Science, Geology, or a non-health related STEM area of study can receive a scholarship award for full tuition for up to 3 years. PlanItGreen hosted six lunch and learns covering topics like water, energy efficiency, native plants, solar, and more. Local radio show host Doris Davenport taught OPRF High School students how to produce their own

radio program while they also got lessons on solar energy and interviewed local leaders about different aspects of bringing solar to the community. The Village of Oak Park Earth Fest drew roughly 1,000 attendees this year, while the 2018 One Earth Film Festival drew more than 5,400 attendees that participated in 60 screenings and events of 33 films in 50 locations throughout Chicagoland. In River Forest, Green Block Parties continued to grow with fifteen blocks -- almost half of all the block parties held in the village -- choosing to plant a free pollinator garden on a parkway as a Green Block Party activity.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Community education around sustainability is at its peak, with the One Earth Film Festival, green block parties, school-based gardens, zero waste initiatives and scores of community events, forums and conferences leading the way. Finding ways to reach people beyond "the choir" is an ongoing challenge. The next big steps ahead in education are to move toward systemic integration of standards-aligned sustainability curricula into instruction, which will provide deeper learning about 21st century issues and solutions related to climate change, waste reduction, composting, local, healthy food and other topics. River Forest Elementary District 90 has built sustainability integration as a goal into its strategic plan, and we're hoping that 2019 will bring further discussion of how best to do this within other public school districts and private schools. The opportunities to create real world learning through on-site school projects (solar, native gardens, water harvesting cisterns, etc.) are endless. The project is developing a youth sustainability leadership program called It's Our Future, which will equip Oak Park and River Forest youth to advocate for climate change solutions and their futures.

# River Forest Surpasses 50% Diversion



## Goals

1. Increase residential waste diversion to 50% by 2020.
2. Reduce overall materials generated by 1% annually.

### WASTE – RESIDENTIAL DATA

Oak Park	2007	2012	2014	2016	2018
Material Diverted (Recycled & Composted)	35.6%	37.9%	37%	43.6%	41.58%
Total Material Collected (tons)	20,783	16,329	17,153	18,779	19,158
% Reduction: Total Material Collected	7.82% reduction from 2007 to 2018				
Per Capita Tons Material Collected	.40 tons	.31 tons	.33 tons	.36 tons	0.37 tons

### WASTE – RESIDENTIAL DATA

River Forest	2007	2012	2014	2016	2018
Material Diverted (Recycled & Composted)	39.2%	44.5%	33%	31.4%	52.03%
Total Material Collected (tons)	4,867	4,404	4,101	3,917	5,645
% Reduction: Total Material Collected	21.41% reduction from 2007 - 2018				
Per Capita Tons Material Collected	.43 tons	.39 tons	.37 tons	.35 tons	.34 tons

#### Notes to Charts

- Oak Park population for 2017 is 52,261, River Forest population is 11,132.
- This is the first data year that leaf collection in River Forest was available and included in the total waste diversion calculations. The composting of leaves has elevated River Forest's waste diversion rate to 52%. Leaf volume in 2018 was incorporated into total material generated while it was not included in 2007, 2012, 2014 or 2016 data.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Total material generated has decreased by 21.4% in River Forest since 2007 and in Oak Park by 7.82%. Total material generated in River Forest has decreased every measurement year since the baseline year of 2007 in River Forest, while in Oak Park total material generated has increased every measurement year since 2014. River Forest's 2018 Diversion Rate of 52% reaches and exceeds PlanItGreen's overall 50% residential waste diversion goal, while Oak Park is at 41.6%. The Village of Oak Park food scrap composting program grew by 292 households and is now up to 1,600 households participating in the composting program. The program diverted 1,572 tons of organics from the landfill last year. River Forest currently has 256 curbside composting subscribers. River Forest hosted the 7th annual Recycling Extravaganza that collected over 29,500 lbs. of electronics, and served 329 households. Collection also

included: 1,350 lbs. of batteries, 5,880 lbs. of scrap metal, 3,335 lbs. of clothing, 20 lbs. of prescription meds, and 101 bikes/helmets. At Hatch Elementary School, the student Green Team began a waste reduction project that collected used but cleaned mascara wands to donate to the Appalachian Wildlife Refuge to clean small animals, where they remove fly eggs and larva from the fur of wild animals. In an effort to reduce landfill waste from lunchrooms, Oak Park D97 has eliminated the spork combo packets (spork, straw, napkin in a plastic pouch) from the lunch program at all the schools. Plastic sporks are still being used, but now they are unbundled from the plastic pouch, thereby reducing unnecessary waste of additional items. All River Forest D90 and Oak Park D97 schools and five private schools (Trinity, St. Giles, Ascension, Alcuin, and The Children's School) continue to compost and achieve diversion rates of about 80%.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Multi-family unit and business recycling continues to be a sore spot for both communities. Both communities would benefit from a franchise agreement that creates more route density, reduces the number of trucks passing through alleys, and results in lower pricing due to increased efficiencies. While Oak Park and River Forest composting programs are running well, their impact is limited due to the voluntary "opt in" nature of the programs, which national studies show generate far less waste diversion than mandatory, whole-community programs. The recycling world itself is challenging now as contamination standards for recycling have been raised and certain materials are no longer accepted – an issue the project will continue to address.

# Both Communities Have Reduced Potable Water Consumption Since 2009



## Goals

1. Reduce consumption of potable water.
2. Use less potable water for landscape and lawn watering, toilet flushing, and other non-essential potable water issues.
3. Increase the use of water-efficient technologies, including dishwashers, low-flow toilets, showerheads, etc.

## HIGHLIGHTS

River Forest's potable water use has decreased by 1% since 2016 and by 22% since 2009. Oak Park's potable water use decreased by 7.82% since 2016 and by 19% since 2009, creating a very positive trend line for both communities. In an effort to find and prevent water main leakage, VOP surveyed 105 miles of water mains and a total of 47 water main, water valve and water service line leaks were found and repaired. River Forest has budgeted for 100 deployable leak sensors to be permanently installed in 2019, which should cover the majority of the water supply system. VOP worked with Rain Ready to complete 30 Residential Installations which led to 500,000 gallons of water infiltrated into soil and diverted from storm water runoff. Oak Park has installed a number of cisterns saving well over 1,000,000 gallons of water annually, which correlates to a \$68,000 savings. Rain gardens have been installed in house by the Park District, including 4 installed in Taylor Park and 3 at Barrie Park. Bioswales at Austin Gardens, Euclid Square Park, and the Oak Park Conservatory have also been installed. A 1500-gallon cistern at Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center to be used for gray water/flushing toilets and irrigation, a 350-gallon cistern at the Oak Park Conservatory for drip irrigation, a 4,400-gallon cistern at

the Conservatory (used for watering inside the greenhouses), a 9,000-gallon cistern at Longfellow Park, and a 7,500-gallon cistern at Field Park have been installed to support irrigation. A 500-square-foot green roof was installed at Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center and a 4,360-square-foot green roof was installed at Ridgeland Commons to reduce storm water runoff. Triton College has installed sensor-type flush valves for toilets, urinals and faucets; installed high-efficiency water heaters, a rainwater harvesting system and an aquaponics system that reuses water.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

While the trend line is positive for reducing potable water use, there remain tremendous opportunities for institutions to increase water efficiency and rainwater harvesting through technology. The project will employ a task force to look at additional strategies for educating residents and businesses, integrating water-efficient technologies and targeting the communities' biggest water users.

## WATER CONSUMPTION (IN GALLONS)

Oak Park	2009	2012	2014	2016	2018
Total Community (excluding non-revenue)	1,685,205,000	1,665,982,000	1,514,921,000	1,481,114,000	1,365,342,000
Residential	1,118,725,000 (66%)	112,024,700 (67%)	996,701,000 (66%)	822,889,000 (55%)	885,445,000 (65%)
Comm/Industrial/Public	566,480,000 (34%)	545,708,000 (33%)	518,220,000 (34%)	490,771,000 (33%)	479,897,000 (35%)
Non-Revenue Water	data not available	data not available	data not available	12%	425,650,000 (23.1%)
Gallons Per Resident	32,626	31,974	29,096	28,327	26,125
River Forest	2009	2012	2014	2016	2018
Total Community (excluding non-revenue)	481,800,000	448,831,000	366,671,901	380,822,052	377,116,164
Residential	343,830,000 (71%)	374,025,967 (83%)	290,909,942 (79%)	data not available	301,564,712 (69.76%)
Comm/Industrial/Public	137,970,000 (29%)	114,805,194 (17%)	75,761,959 (21%)	data not available	75,423,233 (17.45%)
Non-Revenue Water			data not available	12.80%	55,194,000 (12.8%)
Gallons Per Resident	43,164	40,006	32,709	34,005	33,877

### Notes to Chart

- Oak Park population for 2017 is 52,261, River Forest population is 11,132.
- Non-revenue water (fire, public works, leakage, etc.).

# Gardens, Harvest of the Month and Food Recovery Continue to Grow



## Goals

1. Increase the volume of local, sustainable and healthy food procured within the communities.
2. Use more public, private, and institutional land to grow more food, particularly for those in need.
3. Increase the amount of food-scrap-amended compost used on public landscaping and residential gardens and lawns.



## HIGHLIGHTS

Every school in Oak Park District 97 has a garden, some of which include outdoor classrooms, and many donate food to the OPRF Food Pantry. The Oak Park Farmers' Market continues to be one of the best in the metro area. In 2018, D97's Schools' Green Team Garden Collaboration received a Green Award from the Village of Oak Park's Energy & Environment Commission for their work in the school gardens and their first annual school garden tour. Both Oak Park D97 and OPRF High School D200 participate in the Seven Generations Ahead/Illinois Farm-to-School Network Harvest of the Month and Illinois Great Apple Crunch programs that promote the procurement of local, healthy food. Combined, the districts procured 2,630 (.28 lbs. per student) of

local food through the Harvest-of-the-Month Program, and 9,641 local apples for the Illinois Great Apple Crunch. To date, the OPRF Food Pantry has received 1,331 pounds of produce from individual donors (home gardens, congregations, schools and groups) and 72,600 pounds of produce from our rescue partners (Jewel Osco, Whole Foods, etc.). The pantry's Food Surplus Project has diverted 8,796 lbs. of food waste and distributed 9,038 meals. Dominican University provides fresh produce from hydroponic systems to the Oak Park Food Pantry, the dining hall kitchen, and the university's Recipe Box class in the Nutrition department. Sugar Beet Food Co-op hosted its annual Edible Garden tour that highlights how our area gardens and gardeners are utilizing open spaces to grow food, and Oak Park Temple's community garden distributes food to the food pantry. The Village of Oak Park's public works facility has beehives on its green roof which produced 200 jars of honey for the food pantry. Deep Roots which has built 28 edible gardens in the past year, and local restaurants like The Buzz Café, Little Gem Cafe, Carnivore and Cucina Paradiso all incorporate locally grown food from different sources.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

The project's challenge is to track more transparent data around local, sustainable food procurement from major institutions (hospitals, universities, schools). Finding solutions to the issue of wasted food to build upon the work of the Food Surplus Project may include business model development for using "ugly" produce that gets sold very cheaply to support low-income families. The systemic integration of healthy eating/local food curricula in K-12 schools is an opportunity.



# MWRD Awards River Forest \$75,000 for Green Alleys



## Goals

1. Sustainable development is being incorporated into development decisions.
2. Amend local codes and ordinances through the lens of sustainability.
3. Reduce flooding using sustainable strategies in relation to major storm events. (bioswales, green alleys, permeable pavers, etc.)



## HIGHLIGHTS

Both Oak Park and River Forest passed resolutions to become a part of the Greenest Region Compact (GRC), which promotes sustainability in Chicago communities across the region through a checklist of actions. The GRC is founded on 49 high-level goals that guide municipal action, support mayors in their role as environmental leaders, and foster collaboration that will have positive impacts on the region. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) awarded

the Village of River Forest up to \$75,000 in grant funding to construct a green alley between Gale and Keystone avenues, from Vine to Madison. The alley will be able to capture up to 26,490 gallons of storm water per rain event. The Village of River Forest also passed an ordinance allowing beekeeping, and in collaboration with Dominican University, River Forest residents attended free educational workshops relating to beekeeping and related sustainability topics.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

The RainReady Program shows promise to help residents lessen the impacts of major storm events and flooding (which will continue to increase as climate-change impacts worsen). Investing more dollars into green-infrastructure projects and flood mitigation will pay off in the long run and help avoid the costly consequences of flooding. Streetscape projects that increase bike lane connectivity, beautify the community and increase safety and economic sustainability are in process. A comprehensive and funded climate change resiliency plan will pay dividends in the future, and the concept has been built into the PlanItGreen implementation work plan over the next two years.

# Transit-Oriented Development Projects in Oak Park Lead the Way



## Goals

1. Existing businesses are greening their operations.
2. Attract new businesses to the community that feature sustainable products and services.
3. Build a strong local economy and increase resident and business purchases of products and services from local businesses.

## HIGHLIGHTS

New developments in Downtown Oak Park have received sustainability certifications or have registered for certification including Vantage Oak Park (Green Globe, 2017); Maple Place (LEED Gold, 2018); District House (Registered with LEED); and Emerson Oak Park (Registered with LEED). The high-rise and other developments are examples of a transit-oriented development (TOD) strategy, which is considered a best practice for sustainable urban design by the Congress for New Urbanism, the Center for Neighborhood Technology and other sustainability organizations because they reduce reliance on cars, connect residents to public transit centers and support a healthy downtown small business economy. Other developments planning sustainability certification include: The Community Builders - Oak Park I (Green Globes); Albion Oak Park (LEED); and Rush Oak Park Hospital (LEED for Healthcare Facilities). The Residences at Maple Place and District House used construction practices and energy-efficiency measures to reduce its carbon footprint, and include green roofs, close access to public transit, no-VOC paints, high-efficiency furnaces, green carpets, high-performance low-e windows and patio doors, close access to public transit and many other green features. In 2018, the Buzz Cafe in Oak Park received a Village of Oak Park Green Award for single-use plastic reduction & zero-waste initiatives; biodegradable "to go" bags, straws and clear cups/lids; energy-efficient LED lighting; and procuring meats, eggs, fruits and vegetables directly from local farms in Illinois and Wisconsin. Trends retail store in Oak Park promotes the re-use of gently worn clothing and accessories by giving them a second life and keeping them out of the landfill. Building Solutions, Inc. of Oak Park is a company that gives new life to run down properties through conserving as much as possible while correcting and improving the inefficient infrastructure in the home including

high-efficiency boilers, programmable thermostats, energy-star rated appliances, high-efficiency lighting sources, low-flow water fixtures, and repurposing old windows to name a few. Athletico of River Forest is participating in green efforts by switching their styrofoam water cups to a compostable alternative.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Great progress has been made with new transit-oriented developments and businesses that are embracing sustainable features. Downtown density and local small business economic activity has increased. The opportunity moving forward is to market these successes and proactively attract more "green" businesses to our communities while supporting existing businesses with resources to conserve water and energy and reduce waste.



# Native Pollinator Gardens Soar



## Goals

1. Establish 500 native plant/butterfly gardens as part of Oak Park - River Forest Native Garden corridor, including all public buildings with landscaping.
2. Establish Integrated Pest Management and Non-Toxic policies and practices at all major Oak Park and River Forest institutions.
3. Measure acres of open space per capita in the communities.
4. Measure the species and number of trees in Oak Park and River Forest.



## HIGHLIGHTS

West Cook Wild Ones has been holding a spring native plant sale since 2014 and has continued to see sales increase each year since its creation. 3,660 plants were sold this year, and 108 people were first-time customers which shows new interest in planting natives. The wildlife corridor now has 643 gardens in total, surpassing our original goal of 500. The 2018 native garden tour attracted 165 attendees and showcased gardens that included schools, park district, landscape designers' homes, bioswales, pollinator gardens, etc. Oak Park D97 created an Integrated Pest Management policy to implement non-toxic practices for the school district. River Forest installed its first community garden with residents renting seasonal plots. River Forest also installed 15 Parkway for Pollinator Gardens on resident parkways, in collaboration with the Deep Roots

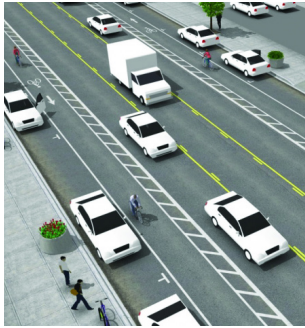
Project and as part of River Forest's Green Block Party Program. Pollinator gardens will continue to be offered in 2019, and existing gardens will receive maintenance help. Two native gardens were installed along the train tracks in River Forest, in an effort to reduce need for water, chemical use and maintenance. River Forest successfully lobbied against federal legislation that would preempt local pesticide protections, and River Forest will continue to advocate for legislative change at state and federal levels, and work to strengthen local pesticide policies. Together, the two Oak Park taxing bodies (VOP & PDOP) share responsibility for the more than 21,000 trees on public property throughout the Village's four-and-a-half square miles that range more than 125 species. In 2017, 555 total trees were planted. The Village of River Forest's Forestry Division maintains over 8,000 trees (and over 90 species) in village parkways. Both Oak Park and River Forest have tree inventory maps on their respective websites so residents can track and research their trees.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

The project will need to continue to expand the number of institutions with Integrated Pest Management and non-toxic weed and pest control policies as evidence mounts to the harmful effects of chemical pesticides. Sustainable procurement in general is an area of growth for Oak Park and River Forest, which the project will address in 2019-2020. Oak Park and River Forest's green canopy and increasing native gardens will continue to make communities havens for butterflies, bees, birds and other wildlife.



# Oak Park and River Forest Sustainable Snapshots



## Transportation—The Madison Street Road Diet

The Madison Street Road Diet Project will narrow Madison Street to one lane in both directions, lower the speed limit to 25 mph, and install buffered bike lanes. This project creates an opportunity for increased biking and walking connectivity of the community, make roads safer and easier for pedestrians and bicyclists, and encourage active transport.



## Food—OPRF Food Pantry's Surplus Project

The OPRF Food Pantry's Surplus Project was created in an effort to simultaneously address problems of food waste and food insecurity. Year to date the project has seven donor cafeterias and seven recipients. Last fiscal year the project rescued over 19,000 meals and sides and diverted over 19,000 lbs of food from the waste stream.



## Waste—Single Use Bag Fee Ordinance

In 2018 the Village of Oak Park implemented a single-use bag fee ordinance. The program is intended to encourage customers to bring their own shopping bags to avoid taking a single-use, disposable bag that may end up as litter. Since its implementation, 9,460,000 fewer bags were used. That is an 80% decrease in single-use bag usage.



## Community Development—Green Alley

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) awarded the Village of River Forest up to \$75,000 in grant funding to construct a green alley between Gale and Keystone avenues, from Vine to Madison. The alley will be able to capture up to 26,490 gallons of stormwater per rain event.



## Water—Diverting Stormwater Runoff

In Oak Park, Rain Ready completed 30 Residential Installations which led to 500,000 gallons of water infiltrated into soil and diverted from stormwater runoff.



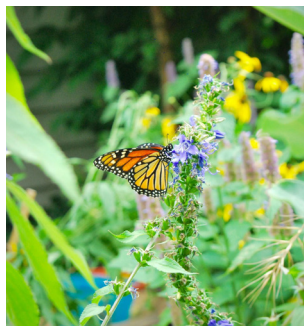
## Energy—Solar Arrays

The Park District of Oak Park has installed 325 kW of solar arrays on their facilities, including: Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center, Longfellow Center, Fox Center, PDOP Administration Center, Oak Park Conservatory, and Ridgeland Commons.



## Economic Development—District House

District House is a LEED Certified, contemporary mid-rise in the heart of Oak Park. This condominium possesses green features such as green roofs, Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat, high-efficiency Energy Star furnace, low-VOC paint, dual-flush toilets, Green Label Plus carpet, open cell & closed cell foam insulation in roof cavity, and a walk score of 90.



## Open Space & Ecosystem—Native Garden Tour

West Cook Wild Ones hosted their annual Native Garden Tour where 165 attendees toured 15 public and private native gardens to see how vital and attractive native plants are to birds, bees and butterflies.



## Education—Free Pollinator Garden

Fifteen River Forest blocks chose to plant a free pollinator garden on a parkway as a Green Block Party activity. Families had the chance to choose a sun or shade garden, get their hands dirty helping to plant the garden, and learn how native plants attract pollinators, require less water, and have deep roots that mitigate flooding.



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# Aligning With Regional Goals

## Looking Toward the Future

The intention of PlanItGreen and this 2018 Community Sustainability Report Card is to drive change toward creating a sustainable and healthy Oak Park and River Forest – change that aligns with broader regional goals. The Sustainable Chicago Action Agenda and the CMAP ON TO 2050 Plan incorporate strong, regional goals that correlate to PlanItGreen goals and strategies. ON TO 2050 addresses transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues, many which overlap with goals and strategies in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest. The Greenest Region Compact II – informed by PlanItGreen and other community plans across the metro area – represents another strategy framework with which to

align. The Villages of Oak Park and River Forest are using the framework along with the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest's Implementation Work Plan to guide priority strategy implementation. Moving forward, PlanItGreen will use this report card to sharpen strategies and enroll leaders in further implementation and reporting – with an eye toward influencing “apples to apples” metrics across Chicago metro-area communities in the hope of advancing regional collaboration and measurement that furthers our individual, community and regional sustainability goals.

## Get Involved

### Contact [act@sevendgenerationsahead.org](mailto:act@sevendgenerationsahead.org) to:

- Join the PlanItGreen mailing list and access newsletters
- Attend events and participate in implementation teams
- Support PlanItGreen financially
- Make inquiries about the project

### Visit [www.sevendgenerationsahead.org](http://www.sevendgenerationsahead.org) to:

- Access the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest
- Access the 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018 Oak Park and River Forest Community Sustainability Report Cards

## Community Sustainability Report Card 2018 Acknowledgements

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**Communityworks** - Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation

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### Report Card Layout and Design

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### Special Thanks

**Antonio Martinez, Jr.**, President and CEO, OPRF Community Foundation

**The Communityworks Advisory Board** – and Co-Chairs David Pope and John Houseal

**The OPRF Community Foundation Board**

**Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)** for data aggregation support

**PlanItGreen Core Team** for its ongoing implementation work

**Oak Park and River Forest Institutional Leaders** for ongoing commitment and implementation

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