



# PlantGreen

The Environmental Sustainability Plan  
for Oak Park and River Forest

Community Sustainability  
Report Card 2014





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# 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 facilitated by non-profit 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.

Phase 1 of PlanItGreen began in August, 2010 with the aggregation of baseline metrics on community resource use. Phase 2 included a multi-faceted community engagement strategy in 2010-11 resulting in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest – complete with goals, targets, and strategies in each of nine sustainability topic areas including energy, waste, transportation, water, food, education, community development, open space and ecosystems, and green economy. The planning process culminated on June 23, 2011 with the release of the final plan. PlanItGreen completed its third year of implementation in 2014, and the 2014 Report Card represents the project's second comprehensive report card to date.

*“One of the primary attractions for our Oak Park and River Forest communities is the interest in and love of our natural surroundings. From the birth of the prairie style architecture in Frank Lloyd Wright, to the current emphasis from home seekers to be in a walkable community, our communities have led the way on encouraging respect and responsibility of our environment. The Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation, through our Communityworks Partnership, looks forward to continual partnership with PlanItGreen, which has been instrumental in creating sustainability committees and entities throughout both villages. PlanItGreen furthers the Foundation's founders' goals to ensure our community remains a place of beauty.”*

**-Kristin Carlson Vogen, President & CEO, Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation**

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# 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 2014 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.

*“Oak Park and River Forest have the only two-community sustainability plan and implementation project in the Chicago metro area. It’s a testament to our collective communities, that we have been able to organize leaders from our taxing bodies, major institutions, community organizations, businesses and faith-based organizations to everyday residents to be able to collectively pursue goals around environmental sustainability. This report card – a key component reflecting our collective interest in achieving results - is designed to provide a transparent, data-based, top-level picture of how well we are doing, and will provide insight as to whether we need to stay the course or change our tactics to achieve our common sustainability goals.”*

– Gary Cuneen, Executive Director, Seven Generations Ahead

# 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.

**Thumbs Up: Exceeded Goals**

**Thumbs Sideways: Met Goals**

**Thumbs Down: Did Not Meet Goals**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Energy	Transportation	Education	Waste	Water	Food	Community Development	Green Economy	Open Space & Ecosystems
								
Oak Park and River Forest had energy use decreases of 7.4% and 7.8% respectively-exceeding the Plan's goal- and also are ahead of pace collectively with renewable energy, led by Oak Park's procurement.	Trends are moving in the right directions for Vehicle Miles Traveled (decreasing) and Public Transit Ridership (increasing), despite not meeting the Plan's 3% annual goals respectively.	Gardens and food scrap composting in most schools/ universities, solar panel installations, and community education through green block parties, the One Earth Film Festival, Green Tuesdays, Native Garden Tours, zero waste fests, etc. are making sustainability hard to miss.	Total residential material generated decreased by 17.5% and 15.7% respectively for Oak Park and River Forest – exceeding the Plan's goal – while residential diversion from landfill rates for both communities regressed, making the 2015 diversion rate goal of 50% difficult to achieve.	River Forest's decreasing potable water consumption trend line since 2009 reflects attention to pipe leakages, residential purchases of water efficient appliances, and increased water costs.	Sugar Beet Co-op met its \$1.8 million capital goal, and is expected to significantly complement existing local food procurement activity through CSAs, the Oak Park Farmers Market, resident gardens, and local restaurant purchases.	Oak Park and River Forest secured a combined \$1,247,496 from the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grants Program to construct permeably-paved green alleys, and the Oak Park Comp Plan further solidified commitment to PlanItGreen strategies.	Strong participation in green business forums with strategy implementation, 10 new certified green businesses, and increased attention to shopping local highlight green business activity.	58% of taxing bodies/large institutions report using green cleaning and non-toxic pest/weed control practices – while 31% have policies – opening the door for increased policy development and implementation.

# Energy Efficiency Goals Exceeded By Both Communities



## Goals

1. Increase Energy Efficiency 30% by 2020.
2. Increase Renewable Energy Procurement 25% by 2020.
3. Reduce GHG Emissions 30% by 2020.

*“For us, the biggest impact on our energy usage has been technology based. We purchased and installed smart energy controls at over forty (40) building locations, which allow two-way communications between our utility delivery systems and our property engineers. The name of the game for sustainability and energy efficiency is control, and smart systems allow us to measure and control our energy usage and realize our energy efficiency goals.”*

**—Bob Planek, Co-owner, Oak Park Apartments**

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Plan's goal of 30% energy use reduction by 2020 requires an average annual decrease in energy use of 3.3% from 2007 levels. Oak Park's annual average energy use decrease over the project's 2012-2014 implementation years is 7.4%, while River Forest's is 7.8% — both of which exceed the Plan's goals. The Plan's renewable energy procurement goal of 25% by 2020 requires a 2.8% average annual procurement for total energy use — which adds up to 8.3% procurement for the three implementation years (2012-2014). Oak Park and River Forest's combined renewable energy procurement for these years is 9.7%, which exceeds the Plan's goal to date. PlanItGreen collaborated with Elevate Energy (formerly Energy Impact Illinois) to develop marketing strategies, support house parties and promote its energy efficiency program, which resulted in over 80 House Parties and 294 Home Assessments — leading to 163 Retrofits in OP and RF since 2012. Oak Park Apartments implemented a wide scope of energy efficiency updates and is installing a new Building Automation Control System (BAC) that will provide live data to benchmark over 1,050 apartments. Oak Park Residence Corporation used CNT/Energy Savers recommendations and NICOR rebates to insulate all steam heating and hot water line piping in a 15-unit building, and achieved therm to heating degree day decreases as great as 47.6%. As of 2014, 28 solar panel installations have been permitted across Oak Park. Lighting fixtures in the Village of Oak Park's two public parking garages now use about 75 percent less energy with LED bulbs, and Oak Park budgeted \$1,035,000 to upgrade street lighting in the Harrison Street business district to high efficiency LED lights.

### OAK PARK

	2007	2012	2013	2014
Therms	34,357,048	28,599,102	34,809,026	31,802,391
kWhs	353,700,838	400,477,682	323,945,598	324,441,404
Total KBTUs	4,642,532,059	4,226,340,050	4,497,908,584	4,198,874,692
Per Capita Energy Use	90,809 KBTUs	81,114 KBTUs	86,389 KBTUs	80,645 KBTUs
Renewables % of kWhs	0%	48%	49%	31%
Renewables % of Total Energy	0%	15%	11.3%	7.5%
GHG Emissions (metric tons)	421,339	290,387	298,479	322,982
Per Capita GHG Emissions	8.24	5.57	5.73	6.20

### RIVER FOREST

	2007	2012	2013	2014
Therms	8,821,530	7,435,415	9,203,666	8,248,225
kWhs	100,998,700	96,843,338	92,385,821	90,786,783
Total KBTUs	1,226,760,564	1,073,970,962	1,210,423,106	1,109,877,641
Per Capita Energy Use	110,043 KBTUs	95,728 KBTUs	107,977 KBTUs	99,007 KBTUs
Renewables % of kWhs	0%	0%	5%	6%
Renewables % of Total Energy	0%	0%	1.2%	1.5%
GHG Emissions (metric tons)	115,368	105,505	109,317	102,578
Per Capita GHG Emissions	10.35	9.40	9.75	9.15

## CHALLENGES AND WORK AHEAD

Both communities collectively are on track with the Plan's renewable energy goal, though the trend line for Oak Park shows decreasing renewable energy procurement. Oak Park's 2014 decision to not renew its 100% renewable energy commitment — and River Forest's 2014 one-year “brown” energy contract with a “green” opt out choice — will provide new contract opportunities for both communities in 2015 to join metro area communities that have selected “green” energy packages with opt out “brown” energy choices. Efficiency initiatives that reduce or eliminate upfront costs and embed paybacks within costs savings will support residential/commercial efficiency moving forward. The Chicago Energy Benchmarking Ordinance and efficiency requirements for large institutions offer a potential model for replication in OP and RF.

### Notes to Chart

\*Population data for per capita calculations in this report includes:

—Oak Park 51,124 (2007); 52,104 (2011); 52,066 (2013)

—River Forest 11,148 (2007); 11,219 (2011); 11,210 (2013)

\*KBTU = Kilo British Thermal Unit (conversion that aggregates therms and kWhs to get total energy use)

\*GHG refers to greenhouse gas

\*Electricity is 24% of total energy in OP in 2014 and 23% in 2013 and 26% of total energy in RF in 2014 and 24% in 2013.

\*River Forest's 5% and 6% (2013 and 2014) renewable procurement and part of Oak Park's 2014 energy mix for one month of 2014 reflects ComEd's energy mix as reported in ComEd's Environmental Disclosure Statements for 2013 and 2014.

\*Oak Park's 2014 data includes energy procured for 5 months with Integrys, 1 month with ComEd, and 6 months with Constellation, and includes 6 months of “green” (17%) opt-in choices by residents and “brown” (83%) energy default option.

# Public Transit Ridership Continues to Increase



## Goals

1. Decrease Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by automobile by 3% annually and by 30% by 2020.
2. Decrease overall GHG emissions from transportation by 3% annually and by 30% by 2020.
3. Increase use of public transit and other alternative modes of transit by 3% annually.

*“Supporting and growing transportation networks that include walking, biking, and transit will promote both public and environmental health. Such a network also will cultivate a landscape in Oak Park that will attract new residents, businesses, and quality development.”*

*—Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager, Village of Oak Park*

## HIGHLIGHTS

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for Oak Park decreased by 11.2% from 2009-2013 (compared to 4.8% for River Forest), just short of the Plan's 3% annual goal target. Oak Park VMT dipped 8.2% from 2011 to 2013, while River Forest VMT increased by 0.3%. Both communities' VMT rates are lower than Suburban Cook County and the region and higher than the City of Chicago. Public Transit Ridership increased on CTA Blue and Green Lines in Oak Park by 3.2% from 2012 to 2014 and by 10.7% from 2007 to 2014. PACE Bus boardings increased by 10% and 11% respectively for OP and RF, while CTA Bus boardings have fluctuated. Generally speaking, Public Transit Ridership has shown a very positive trend over the past 8 years, though increases have not met the Plan's 3% annual increase target. Biking and walking infrastructure within Oak Park has increased, with bike lane miles jumping from 4.73 in 2013 to 6.35 in 2014; marked shared bike lanes increasing to 5.88 in 2014 from 2.50 in 2013 resulting in total combined marked bike lane miles of 12.23 in 2014 compared to 7.23 in 2013. In 2013 the Village installed 2 bike parking shelters with a federally funded enhancement project on South Blvd adjacent to the Green Line CTA stop at Ridgeland. Each bike shelter can accommodate approximately 24 bikes and has been very heavily utilized since their installation. In 2014 the Village of Oak Park contracted with Active Transportation Alliance to develop a Bike Share and Bike Boulevard System Study which will be presented to the Board in 2015 for adoption as an addendum to the 2008 Bike Plan.

## CHALLENGES AND WORK AHEAD

Concordia, Dominican and Triton have been meeting with PACE to explore strategies for increasing public transit options for their students. Holmes Elementary has taken the first step in surveying its parents on interest and challenges related to biking and walking to school, and a leadership team has developed recommendations to improve conditions along safe routes. Oak Park's award-winning Complete Streets policy has yet to be converted into a Madison Street economic development strategy and complete streets project – which presents a great opportunity for Oak Park to join multiple communities across the country whose complete streets infrastructure projects are demonstrating local retail sales increases, increased residential property values, and increased private investment. In 2014 the Village (along with Chicago and Evanston) was awarded a grant from the State of Illinois for expanding the Divvy bike share program into Oak Park, which would add to Oak Park's biking infrastructure.

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

	2011	2013	2009-2013	Trend
Chicago	12,326	10,530	18%	↓
Suburban Cook Co.	18,638	17,740	7.40%	↓
Oak Park	13,892	12,748	11.20%	↓
River Forest	15,736	15,784	4.80%	↓

**Source:** CMAP analysis of US Census Bureau, HERE, and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency data. **Notes:** Average Annual Miles Driven per Vehicle is calculated by CMAP from IEPA emissions inspection data by subtracting a previous odometer reading from the current year odometer reading, then annualizing the data for vehicles that remain within the same zip code between readings. Readings are taken every 2 years. The initial reading for new cars is taken after the 4th year.

## OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP CTA Trains Green and Blue Lines: Oak Park

	2007	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014*
Total Average Weekday Entries:						
Oak Park	12,978	13,225	13,566	13,917	13,898	14,366
% Change 2012-2014						3.23%
% Change 2007-2014						10.70%
Total Average Weekday Entries:						
System Wide	514,256	537,403	579,861	601,049	591,072	619,426
Annual % Change	Baseline	0.1%	4.7%	3.7%	-1.66%	4.80%
% Change 2007-2014						20.45%

## CTA/PACE Bus: Average Weekday Boardings

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
PACE-Oak Park	3,964				4,377	4,377	4,807	4,810
PACE-River Forest	1,516				1,392	1,357	1,494	1,505
CTA-Oak Park	10,136	10,800	10,319	9,691	9,741	9,517	9,307	9,497
CTA-River Forest	962	1,178	1,314	1,182	1,294	1,139	1,201	1,294

\* Jan 2014-Nov 2014

# River Forest D90 Installs Solar Panels



### Goals

1. Sustainable choices by residents, stakeholders, and visitors to OP and RF become commonplace.
2. Each school in OP and RF integrates sustainability into curricula.

### HIGHLIGHTS

River Forest Public School District 90 was granted \$21,000 from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to purchase four solar panels, with the expectation that each installation will support the power needs of approximately one classroom. D90 students are now learning about solar energy with a real life application at their fingertips. School gardens continue to thrive at the elementary schools. The Zero Waste Schools Program is now at 9 of 10 D97 schools and all 3 D90 schools – Beye Elementary reports a 97% waste diversion rate and has a strong cadre of student Zero Waste Ambassadors that are educating the younger kids. 2014 marked the 8th Annual “Hatch Patch Harvest”, which involved Hatch students and parents picking 200 lbs of food for their harvest dinner and another 300 lbs for the OPRF Food Pantry. In 2014, Green Community Connections’ One Earth Film Fest expanded to Chicago and the metro area, with firm roots still in Oak Park and River Forest. Green Community Connections Pro-Action Cafes were recently launched as a vehicle for engaging citizens in working on sustainability projects, policies and initiatives. PlanItGreen worked with the Interfaith Green Network (IGN) on forums focused on energy efficiency, waste reduction, and water conservation in 2013 and 2014, including lay leader forums and a clergy breakfast that highlighted the PlanItGreen Congregation

Sustainability Checklist to encourage the implementation of strategies on an individual and congregational level. Triton College has included sustainability as part of campus-wide learning outcomes, and achieved Gold level status in 2014 through the Illinois Campus Sustainability Compact.

### CHALLENGES AND WHAT’S AHEAD

PlanItGreen is exploring with D97 the possibility of integrating a standards-based Zero Waste Curriculum to complement the zero waste practices that most schools are implementing. A next step on the operations side is to engage the remaining Oak Park public school (Brooks) in food scrap composting. Private schools (Trinity and St. Giles) have expressed interest in zero waste implementation, and will be a focus for 2015. IGN will focus some of its 2015 activity on local policy. Activities including RF green block parties, native garden tours, the Zero Waste Campout, Green Tuesdays, the Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center, zero waste festivals, and events through partner institutions will continue to provide education that inspires action among community residents.

*“The Solar Schools project has proven to be a tremendous catalyst for teaching and learning about sustainability, alternate energy, and renewable energy careers in District 90.”*

*– Ed Condon, Superintendent,  
River Forest Public School District 90*



# Residential Waste Diversion Slides Backwards Despite Food Scrap Composting Progress



## Goals

1. Increase residential waste diversion to 50% by 2015 and to 62.5% by 2020.
2. Reduce overall material generation by 1% annually.

*“Research indicates that food scrap composting is the wave of the future in waste management. Rush Oak Park Hospital is proud to be one of a handful of large institutions in our community utilizing this process, thereby reducing our carbon footprint on the community and planet.”*

**- Cynthia Vasquez, Director of Volunteer Services and Green Team Chairperson, Rush Oak Park Hospital**

## HIGHLIGHTS

Total residential material generated has decreased by 17.5% and 15.7% respectively for Oak Park and River Forest since 2007 – exceeding the plan's goal of a 1% annual decrease in material generated. Though non-residential data is not available, waste diversion and food scrap composting at schools, universities and hospitals continues to grow in both communities. All River Forest District 90 schools continue to compost, and 9 of 10 Oak Park District 97 schools have increased diversion rates and are composting on site or having food scraps hauled to a compost facility. Rush Oak Park Hospital's diversion rates climbed from 19% in 2013 to 23% in 2014, and their food scrap diversion volume has increased by 63% to 5.7 tons in 2014. Concordia University in the first seven months of its food scrap program has diverted 17,000 pounds. Oak Park's Residential Food Scrap Composting Program continues to grow with 760 households participating in 2014 (up from 110 households during the 2012 pilot), and with collections of yard and food scraps increasing 22% from 2013 to a total of 1,488 tons in 2014. River Forest's annual Recycling Extravaganza continues to soar, with well over 25 types of items collected including 40,000 lbs. of electronics, and green block parties have introduced approximately 54 residents to compost with Earth Machines since 2012.

## CHALLENGES AND WORK AHEAD

The rates for residential material diverted from landfill for Oak Park dipped from 39% to 37% from 2012 to 2014, and for River Forest dropped back to 33% in 2014 from 44.5% in 2012. This decline will make achieving the plan's goal of a 50% materials diversion rate by 2015 difficult. To move beyond 50%, both communities will need to take a harder look at the types and volumes of materials entering landfills, and develop additional strategies that chart a path toward 50% diversion and beyond. Communities and states across the country are beginning to place bans on certain materials entering landfills – including yard waste and food scraps. Oak Park and River Forest may need to look at financial incentives and policies that drive increased recycling, food scrap composting and waste elimination – or settle for stagnation in materials diversion and recycling rates. Aggregating commercial, multi-family and institutional data remains an issue, as the multiple haulers that serve both communities have not complied with requests to track this data from their multiple contracts. Commercial and multi-family buildings will need to be further targeted to increase recycling and diversion.

## WASTE – RESIDENTIAL DATA\*

<b>Oak Park</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Material Diverted	35.6%	37.9%	39%	37%
Total Material Collected (tons)	20,783	16,329	17,274	17,153
% Reduction In Material Generated	17.5% reduction from 2007 to 2014			
Per Capita Material Generated	.40 tons	.31 tons	–	.33 tons
<b>River Forest</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Material Diverted	39.2%	44.5%	32%	33%
Total Material Collected (tons)	4,867	4,404	3,875	4,101
% Reduction in Material Generated	15.7% reduction from 2007 to 2014			
Per Capita Material Generated	.43 tons	.39 tons	–	.37 tons

\*Oak Park population for 2013 is 52,066  
River Forest population for 2013 is 11,210.



# River Forest Continues Water Conservation Trend



## Goals

1. Reduce overall community potable water consumption.
2. Reduce stormwater runoff.
3. Educate community about the need for water conservation and quality.

## HIGHLIGHTS

River Forest decreased its potable water consumption for each of the data years aggregated, and reduced its per capita consumption to close to Oak Park per capita levels. Oak Park community water use in 2014 is 10% less than 2009, though the trend line fluctuated to higher consumption in 2014 than the previous year. River Forest cites an increase in residential use of water efficient appliances (dishwashers, toilets, washing machines, etc.), aggressive leak detection and water main repair, and water rate increases among the core factors in its water conservation trend. Institutions have influenced the trend as well. Concordia University conducted a water audit in conjunction with food service provider, Sodexo, and consumed 3.7 million fewer gallons of water in 2014 than in 2013.

Concordia cites changes in Sodexo practices, aerators, reduced watering of grass, and the fixing of leaks as the key contributors to reduced water usage. Dominican University has used an existing cistern, a large water tank that was built in the 1920s, to collect rainwater from the buildings and to use for the irrigation of campus grounds and in the air conditioning system in Parmer Hall. The cistern system has reduced the amount of potable water purchased by 4-6 million gallons per year. Triton College's main parking lots on the West Campus were rebuilt to include two below-ground rainwater cisterns with a nearly two million gallon total capacity, which are used to water the grounds. The Village of Oak Park Energy and Water Efficiency Rebate Program funded by the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation offers \$100 each to 50 households to install low-flow toilets. Another 300

*“Water is an important natural resource and the Village takes its stewardship very seriously. We have instituted annual village-wide leak detection surveys and are committed to ensuring our infrastructure is sound.”*

**—Eric Palm, Village Administrator,  
Village of River Forest**

households received free low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators. As part of its 2013 Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan, Oak Park is installing new smart meter register heads throughout the water system; testing pumping station meters to ensure accurate reporting of water usage; completed a water rate study to provide alternatives for the Village to consider in an effort to develop full cost pricing; and commissions bi-annual water system leak surveys to seek out leaky pipes.

## CHALLENGES AND WORK AHEAD

Water consumption will fluctuate as temperatures rise – which climate scientists predict will occur as a result of climate change. Water is currently undervalued according to many experts, and rate adjustments toward full cost pricing will likely play a role in usage moving forward. As Illinois' plumbing codes are changing to allow for rainwater harvesting and grey water re-use systems, both communities have a tremendous opportunity to incorporate these systems and avoid using potable water for lawn care, gardens, and flushing toilets. Leak detection and repair will continue to play a role in conserving water. Native plantings that require less water will also support water conservation efforts, while increased green infrastructure installations including porous paving, bioswales, green roofs, and compost amended soil will reduce stormwater runoff and flooding potential.

## WATER CONSUMPTION (IN GALLONS)

<b>Oak Park</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total Community	1,685,205,000	1,665,982,000	1,366,518,000	1,514,921,000
Residential	1,118,725,000 (66%)	1,120,274,000 (67%)	839,488,000 (61%)	996,701,000 (66%)
Comm/Industrial/Public	566,480,000 (34%)	545,708,000 (33%)	527,030,000 (39%)	518,220,000 (34%)
Gallons Per Resident	32,626	31,974	26,246	29,096

<b>River Forest</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total Community	481,800,000	448,831,000	408,556,828	366,671,901
Residential	343,830,000 (71%)	374,025,967 (83%)	328,537,706 (80%)	290,909,942 (79%)
Comm/Industrial/Public	137,970,000 (29%)	114,805,194 (17%)	80,019,123 (20%)	75,761,959 (21%)
Gallons Per Resident	43,164	40,006	36,446	32,709

# Sugar Beet Food Co-op Prepares for 2015 Opening



## Goals

1. Use more community land to grow food.
2. Increase availability of local food year round.
3. Build healthy soil.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Sugar Beet Food Co-op secured its new home on Madison Street, enrolled over 1,000 member owners, raised \$1.8 million (including \$500,000 through the Village of Oak Park TIF), and will open in Spring 2015. The Co-op anticipates the creation of 25-30 new jobs, and will add significant volume to local, sustainably raised food coming into the community. Both communities play host to numerous Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) hubs, which supply “subscriptions” of boxes of food in season from local farms. 2015 will mark the 40th season for the Oak Park Farmers Market, which remains to be one of the best farmers markets in Chicagoland. Sodexo at Concordia University estimates that 20-30% of its purchases are from a local source depending on seasonality and availability. Dominican and vendor Chartwells Thompson reported local produce spending of 22%, and additional products including: Beverages: 39.23%; Chicken: 70.54%; Dairy Products 84.71%; Fish and Seafood 87.74%; and Turkey: 95.65%. OPRF High School purchased \$3,798 worth of fruits and vegetables from local sources in 2014, including broccoli, apples, carrots, watermelon, potatoes, kale, lettuce, and cauliflower. Schools in both communities are growing food in gardens, and linking food tastings to education about healthy eating. Ascension Church operates a stellar community garden program, which supplies food to St. Martin de Porres Church food pantry in Austin.

## CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Price and seasonality continue to present challenges to increased local food procurement. Finding affordable local food options in season – and looking at local frozen options - will require creative purchasing and planning by all institutions moving forward. Establishing internal goal targets will support increased local food procurement. K-12 local food procurement has not seen significant increase, and will benefit from goal targets and increased priority. Sodexo at Concordia will host a Farmer's Market in 2015 for students, and will feature menus with messaging about where the food comes from. Congregations have an opportunity to join Ascension and other local models in growing food for local consumption and supporting people in need.

*“From the grass roots beginnings of the Sugar Beet Food Co-op in 2013, the Village of Oak Park has been supportive at every turn in our development. From helping us promote our project through community forums and events to providing financial backing with TIF funds, the leadership of Oak Park has shown that they want to invest in a progressive new business development that will benefit our community in many ways.”*

**–Cheryl Munoz, Founder, Sugar Beet Food Co-op**

# River Forest Sustainability Committee Emerges to Guide Implementation



### Goals

1. Create Sustainable Development criteria to guide development decisions.
2. Review and amend local codes and ordinances.
3. Promote community development projects that adhere to sustainability criteria.

### HIGHLIGHTS

The new River Forest Sustainability Committee was established through an intergovernmental agreement between the Parks Foundation (an arm of the River Forest Park District) and the Village of River Forest, which will counsel the Village on sustainability decisions, and will focus on implementing PlanItGreen strategies. River Forest secured \$484,169 in funds through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant (IGIG) program to reduce the amount of pollution running into Illinois waterways from stormwater sources and reduce the risk of localized flooding, which allow the Village to reconstruct 34,800 square feet of alley space within five alleys with permeable pavers, enabling an estimated 164,350 gallons of stormwater to infiltrate into the ground each year in lieu of the Village's sewer system. Approximately half of the IGIG-funded permeable paver project was completed in 2014. Oak Park's grant from the IGIG program was \$763,327 to be used toward a Green Alley Program that will reduce storm water runoff volume and peak rates and filter sediments and pollutants such as Phosphorous and Nitrogen. The amount of storm water runoff collected is reduced by approximately 39% by using permeable pavers which equates roughly to 1.1 million gallons per year this project. The Oak Park Comp Plan was completed in 2014, which includes key strategies in the chapters of Environmental Sustainability; Parks, Open Space and Environmental Features; Land Use and

the Built Environment; and Transportation, Infrastructure and Communications Technologies. Many strategies in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest were included in the Comp Plan.

### CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Two residential developments (22 townhomes and 10 condominium units) were approved by the Village of Oak Park Board in 2014, which will be required to meet minimum number of LEED points. The Village of Oak Park has issued an RFP for consultants to help with an update to the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance in 2015, and will be looking at additional sustainable practices to incorporate into the code. The Village of Oak Park is exploring the development of a multi-jurisdictional, multi-community staff position and organization that would focus on regional sustainability initiatives in the immediate west suburban Cook County sub-region. The new River Forest Sustainability Committee will focus on green lawn care, native plants and water use among other strategies in 2015. The Madison Street "complete street" project has not gained traction to date, and still presents a 2015 opportunity for linking economic development and bikable/walkable community objectives along one of Oak Park's major road ways and potential robust business corridors. RF's implementation of street scape improvements from IDOT funding is scheduled for 2015.

*"River Forest, for the first time, has turned to an exceptional group of residents who will foster environmental health and stewardship throughout our community. The Sustainability Committee, a partnership with the River Forest Parks Foundation, will advise trustees on "green" initiatives, policy and activities that will make "reduce, reuse, recycle" watchwords in our community."*

**—Cathy Adduci, President, Village of River Forest**



# Green Business Forums Support Resource Conservation



## Goals

1. Provide support to green existing OP and RF businesses and attract new green businesses toward goal of 50% green businesses by 2020.
2. Become a dual community green economy magnet that attracts new green businesses to OP and RF.
3. Pilot models of business interdependency between OP and RF businesses that increase resource conservation and sustainability.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The former Oak Park Development Corporation (OPDC) implemented its Green Business Program that engaged 25 Oak Park and River Forest businesses in pre- and post-sustainability audits, education on energy-efficiency upgrades and incentives, seminars, and sharing of best practices. Participants included:

- Wonder Works
- Buzz Cafe
- Kinderhook Tap
- Eyre Restaurant
- Green Home Experts
- Magical Mind Studio
- Ten Thousand Villages
- Scratch 'n Sniff
- Pumpkin Moon
- AltCare Health Center
- West Cook YMCA
- Sugarcup Trading
- Greenline Wheels
- Takara Designs
- Beyond Properties
- Lake Theatre
- Barclay's Grille
- Oak Park Dental
- Carleton Hotel
- Sirius Cooks
- Serenity Partners
- Little Bits Workshop
- Nevin Hedlund Architects
- Sun Star Dental
- River Forest Community Center

## Program Summary

18 businesses made energy efficiency improvements, and were projected to save an average of \$2,300 annually on their utility bills with an average payback period of 2.5 years. The larger participants, West Cook YMCA and River Forest Community Center, are projected to save \$7,000 to \$10,000 annually. 24 participants have formal recycling programs, and The Buzz Café and Sirius Cooks have initiated commercial composting. Participating restaurants installed high-efficiency sprayers prior to the program, and faucet aerators were installed for free. Three currently source food locally.

## Certification

Triton College engaged businesses in training on the process of pursuing Green Business Certification, and provided technical assistance support to 11 OP-RF businesses that elected to pursue certification through the Illinois Green Business Association (IGBA). The project addressed the PlanItGreen priority areas Energy, Waste, Water, and Transportation. Certified businesses include:

- Bead in Hand
- Beyond Properties
- Buzz Café
- Downtown Oak Park Association
- Eyrie Restaurant
- Green Home Experts
- Greenline Wheels
- Oak Park Township
- River Forest Chocolates
- Majamas
- Seven Generations Ahead

*“Our efforts toward sustainability go hand in hand with our economic development. The new Lake and Forest development will be LEED Silver Certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. Our village’s composting program exemplifies how a municipal government can also encourage sustainability practices among its citizenry.”*

**—Anan Abu-Taleb, President,  
Village of Oak Park**

## CHALLENGES AND WORK AHEAD

This past year PlanItGreen teamed up with Downtown Oak Park, the Village of Oak Park and the Green Chicago Restaurant Coalition to produce the first Eco-nomic Restaurant Workshop focusing on energy and water conservation programs, recycling and composting and local food sourcing. The goal of providing resources to local businesses to enhance their bottom lines and sustainability will continue to be a focus. To date, there has not been a coordinated strategy to make OP and RF “green business magnet” communities, though there is growing awareness of the market for businesses with a sustainability angle. The Oak Park Brewing Company and Hamburger Mary’s, Amour de la Terre, Native Foods, and Noble Kinsman Brewery are among the new and emerging green businesses in OP and RF. There is opportunity ahead to combine economic development priorities with a plan for attracting sustainable businesses to both communities.

## Majority of Institutions Report Using Non-Toxic Practices



### Goals

1. Contribute to greater ecosystem services (air, water, healthy soil, habitat, aesthetics).
2. Enhance existing open spaces and ecosystems.
3. Reduce volume of toxic materials used on existing land (salt, synthetic chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.).
4. Create more community and relationships through existing open space.

### HIGHLIGHTS

In 2014 PlanItGreen collaborated with the Midwest Pesticide Action Center to deliver a forum on policies and best practices related to non-toxic pest and weed control and green cleaning. Subsequently, PlanItGreen has tracked policies and practices among the major taxing bodies and institutions, which has shown that among 18 institutions 31% currently have policies on green cleaning and/or non-toxic pest and weed control; and 59% are implementing green cleaning and/or non-toxic practices. On the residential level, the Village of Oak Park's Environment and Energy Commission and River Forest advocates have begun to implement a campaign to post 1,000 "No Pesticides" yard signs on community lawns. Wild Ones received grant funding to educate community members and support the installation of 100 Butterfly and Native Plant Gardens at Oak Park and River Forest institutions and residences (as of this report they have exceeded their goal), which will create a natural habitat corridor between Austin Blvd and Thatcher Woods for butterflies, bees and other wildlife.

### CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

Residential chemical use continues through private lawn care companies. The survey of institutions and green cleaning and non-toxic pest/weed control policies provides opportunities for those institutions to develop policies, procure products, and implement practices. Oak Park

is applying to be declared as an arboretum in 2015, as it is home to 18,000 trees and more than 150 species. The Lisle-based Morton Register of Arboreta will review the village's application and grant accreditation, and if granted would make Oak Park only the second municipal

*"The Park District of Oak Park remains committed to its sustainable Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and green cleaning policies and practices. All athletic fields are maintained through organic methods of aeration, over seeding, top dressing with sand/peat mixture and irrigation. The Park District continues to only use small amounts of glyphosate along fence lines, sidewalk cracks and building foundations."*

**- Jan Arnold, Executive Director, Park District of Oak Park**

arboretum in the United States. The Park District of Oak Park will construct the Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center (being built to Platinum LEED standards), which will feature geo thermal, solar panels, rain harvesting for flushing and irrigation and will be home to.. a nature based preschool and will serve as an education tool for our residents on sustainability efforts they may deploy in their own homes. Continued implementation of native plant gardens and landscaping will enhance our communities' urban forest character, and attract residents who value thriving urban ecosystems.

### NON-TOXIC WEED/PEST CONTROL AND GREEN CLEANING\*

	POLICIES			PRACTICES		
	Green Cleaning	Integrated Pest Management	Non-Toxic Pest/Weed Control	Green Cleaning	Integrated Pest Management	Non-Toxic Pest/Weed Control
Village of Oak Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village of River Forest	N	N	N	S	S	S
Park District of Oak Park	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y**
River Forest Park District	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
Oak Park Public Library	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y
River Forest Public Library	N	N	N	S	Y	Y
Oak Park Elementary District 97	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
River Forest Elementary District 90	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y-pest N-weed
OPRF High School	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Trinity High School	N	N	N	N	N	N
Fenwick High School	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dominican University	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Concordia University	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Triton College	N	N	N	Y	Y	N
Oak Park Township	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
River Forest Township	N	N	N	N	N	N
West Suburban Medical Center	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rush Oak Park Hospital	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS

**Y=Yes; N=No; S=Sometimes; DNS=Did not supply information** \*all results are self-reported by institutions \*\* Glyphosate 1-2x's/year

# Oak Park and River Forest Sustainable Snapshots



## Energy

1430 Jackson in River Forest is the location of Chicago-land's first certified Passive House – a German-derived term referring to ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling. The home was designed by Oak Park-based architect Tom Bassett-Dilley.



## Waste

Julian Middle School established its zero waste initiative, which converted Julian from 0% waste diversion from landfill to 80% - including 29,000 milk cartons being recycled, 16,000 lbs of food waste composted, and 19,500 water bottles no longer being purchased due to policy change.



## Community Development

The Villages of Oak Park and River Forest combined to score \$1,247,496 through the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program to construct permeably paved green alleys, which will keep water in aquifers, filter pollutants, and reduce flooding.



## Transportation

In 2013 the Village of Oak Park installed 2 bike parking shelters on South Blvd adjacent to the Green Line CTA stop at Ridgeland. Each bike shelter can accommodate approximately 24 bikes and have been very heavily utilized.



## Water

Dominican University has used a large water tank that was built in the 1920s as a cistern to collect rainwater from the buildings to use for irrigating campus grounds and in the air conditioning system in Parmer Hall – saving 4-6 million gallons per year.



## Green Economy

The Buzz Café became green business certified through the Illinois Green Business Association. Locally sourced, organic, vegan and vegetarian foods, fair trade coffees, a new composting program, and energy efficiency actions helped secure certification.



## Education

River Forest Public School District 90 installed four solar panels for its schools through a \$21,000 Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation grant.



## Food

The Sugar Beet Food Co-op secured a new home, enrolled over 1000 member owners, raised \$1.8 million, and is due to open in Spring 2015.



## Open Space/Ecosystems

West Cook Wild Ones (WCWO) is establishing a wildlife corridor that connects Columbus Park to Thatcher Woods through the creation of 100 new or expanded gardens incorporating native plants through the Oak Park/River Forest area.



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# Alignment with Regional Plans – Looking Toward the Future

The intention of the PlanItGreen project and Community Sustainability Report Card 2014 is to drive change towards creating a sustainable and healthy Oak Park and River Forest – change that aligns with broader regional goals. The Chicago Climate Action Plan and the CMAP GO TO 2040 Plan (metropolitan Chicago's first regional plan in over 100 years) incorporate strong, regional goals that the PlanItGreen project is working toward achieving. GO TO 2040 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. GO TO 2040 also specifically recommends that local governments and communities implement policies to conserve water, manage stormwater, and increase energy efficiency – key elements of the PlanItGreen platform. Through CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, PlanItGreen in 2012

was able to secure data aggregation and indicator analysis support for this report card, and add another voice to the table as we made decisions about which data to use. Moving forward, PlanItGreen will use this report card to sharpen strategies and enroll leaders in further implementation and reporting. The project also intends to use this report card as a point of reference for developing “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.

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## Get Involved

Contact [act@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:act@sevengenerationsahead.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.sevengenerationsahead.org](http://www.sevengenerationsahead.org) to:

- access the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest
- access the 2012 and 2014 Oak Park and River Forest Community Sustainability Report Cards

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## Community Sustainability Report Card 2014 Acknowledgements

### Report Card Funding

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### Final Report Card Review and Evaluation Decisions

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### Report Card Written and Submitted by

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