
Park District Of Oak Park

Sustainability Plan

2024-2026



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Table of Contents

Introduction 3

 What is Sustainability? 4

 Background & Scope..... 5

 Sustainability Plan Structure... 6

 Sustainability Plan 7

 Employee Education, Training, & Engagement 7

 Community/Patrons Education & Engagement 8

 Utility/Energy Conservation 10

 Water Conservation & Management 11

 Fleet Management..... 12

 Sustainable Acquisition & Use of Agency Supplies 14

 Recycling & Solid Waste Management..... 15

 Sustainable Infrastructure & Natural Areas 16

 Natural Resources & Habitat Preservation 17

 Health & Wellness 18

 Additional Sustainability Resources..... 19

 Appendix A: Recommended Initiatives for Future Investigation/Implementation..... 19

Introduction

The mission of the Park District of Oak Park states “In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences through parks, programs and facilities.”

Since 1912, the Park District of Oak Park has provided park and recreation experiences to the citizens of Oak Park and in doing so, has made and continues to make a positive impact on our community. Our Park and Recreation services make significant contributions to the physical and mental health of our residents, the quality of the environment here in Oak Park and the economic growth of our community.

The Park District owns and operates 24 facilities that occupy 84 acres of parkland within the Village including:

- 7 neighborhood recreation centers
- 18 parks including the unique urban forest Austin Gardens and our village green Scoville Park
- Dole Center – Owned by the Village of Oak Park, this historic building houses Park District fitness and karate classes and many cultural arts programs and is also home to the Dole Library, a branch of the Oak Park Public Library system.
- 3 historic properties (Cheney Mansion, Pleasant Home, and the Oak Park Conservatory)
- 2 outdoor swimming pools (Rehm and Ridgeland Common)
- 1 indoor, year-round ice rink (Paul Hruby Ice Arena at Ridgeland Common)
- 1 Gymnastics and Recreation Center
- 1 Community Recreation Center
- 1 Environmental Education Center in Austin Gardens Park
- 7 special facilities including Stevenson Park Active Sport Area featuring basketball courts and skate park, Longfellow Park basketball courts, Barrie Park sports court, Rehm Trains, and the Hedges Administrative Center

Pleasant Home is designated a National Historic Landmark. Scoville Park and the Oak Park Conservatory are named by the National Park Service to the National Register of Historic Places. Cheney Mansion and the Oak Park Conservatory were granted Oak Park Historic Landmark status.

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is a complex concept that does not have a universally-agreed upon definition. However, definitions of the term oftentimes acknowledge the UN Brundtland Commissions original definition for sustainable development from the late 1980s, generally focusing on the importance of preserving the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations from satisfying their own needs. As depicted in the graphic (right), many definitions for the term look at the interconnectedness of the social, economic, and environmental factors that make survival equitable, viable, and bearable.

A succinct definition for sustainability from the [UCLA Sustainability Committee](#) defines the term as, *“the physical development and institutional operating practices that meet the needs of present users without compromising the ability of future*

to use and waste of natural resources. Sustainable practices support ecological, human, and economic health and vitality. Sustainability presumes that resources are finite, and should be used conservatively and wisely with a view to long-term priorities and consequences of the ways in which resources are used.”

In short, sustainability is based on the principle that in order to continue having access to clean air, clean water, materials, and other natural resources needed for our survival, we must act deliberately to protect and reduce any unnecessary waste of those resources. As an organization, the PDOP provides services, amenities, and opportunities for its citizens as well as visitors to the area. How those services, amenities, and opportunities are provided, from initial design through long-term maintenance plays a significant role in whether the organization is supporting regional sustainability.

The Brundtland Report was the catalyst that helped focus humanity on our obligations to future generations as well as to the importance of developing people, not just protecting the environment. However, there is a growing consensus among scholars and leaders around the world that we must now build on the Brundtland Report by incorporating a deeper consideration of human well-being into the evolving approach to sustainable development on local, regional, and global levels. That consensus argues that when governments, firms, and other organizations consider their possible paths toward sustainable development, they should focus on implications for the well-being of individual people aggregated within and across generations. Well-being depends, of course, on conservation of natural resources and the environment. But there are also other assets from which a society can draw to shape its own wellbeing to pass on to successive generations.

The Park District of Oak Park is committed to stewardship of the environment, our community, and the workplace through implementation of sustainable practices that preserve natural and economic resources, reduce waste and consumption, reduce the carbon footprint, promote green practices in our facilities and programs, and support the wellness of our employees and community.

generations to meet their own needs, particularly with regard



[Enviroprofit.com](#), David Zielski, December 1, 2013.

Background & Scope

The Greening Task Force (GTF), a group of citizen volunteers and staff, authored the Park District's Environmental Policy, which the Park Board passed on August 21, 2008. The GTF was organized in October 2007 with three specific goals: 1) to author a comprehensive tree policy for use throughout the Park District of Oak Park encompassing tree replacement, preservation, and diversity; 2) to investigate and propose recycling, energy conservation, and environmentally-sound operations recommendations to the Park District of Oak Park; 3) to create a plan for the stewardship of bio diverse areas within the Park District. The task force members divided into three groups and submerged themselves in their specific areas for seven months. This group discussed environmental issues the Park District faces and the different measures that can be taken to meet citizens' greening interests and maintain the health of the parks.

The outcome of the Greening Task Force's efforts is the Environmental Policy – believed to be the first of its kind in Oak Park. The Policy is quilted from a variety of sources and is a document entirely unique in its design and content. The Policy recommends that the GAC (Greening Advisory Committee) be instituted as a permanent committee to support the Park District in the Policy's implementation and serve as a bridge between the PDOP and Oak Park citizens. In 2019, the Park District changed the name of this group to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee. The newly formed ESAC is made up of volunteer citizens that are appointed by the Board of Commissioners to a three-year term.

It is the mission of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee to monitor and contribute to the Park District of Oak Park's environmental activities. This committee will oversee the implementation of the PDOP's Environmental Policy and related activities and provide a valuable communication channel between the Park District and the citizens of Oak Park. The ESAC will offer an independent perspective on parks and sustainability issues affecting the community with each member representing only themselves and not any organization(s) to which they may belong. Through this cooperative effort, the Park District will be better able to assess community needs and expectations necessary to carry out its mission, "In partnership with the community, we provide quality parks and recreation experiences for the residents of Oak Park."

The Park District identified Sustainability as one of our core values and strategic initiatives in 2015. One of the objectives was to create a Sustainability Plan for the agency to use to set goals and track progress. This is the first version of the document that is intended to be a working document.

*The Sustainability Plan is designed to be updated every two years. This iteration of the document covers goals and recommendations for the period of January 2024 – December 2025.

*The Sustainability Plan is reviewed regularly by the ESAC to ensure the plan is in line with new practices and technologies.

Sustainability Plan Structure

The Sustainability Plan is comprehensive and includes goals and recommendations across ten work areas or elements. These elements include:

- Employee Education, Training, & Engagement
- Community & Patrons Education & Engagement
- Utility/Energy Conservation
- Water Conservation & Management
- Fleet Management
- Sustainable Acquisition & Use of Agency Supplies
- Recycling & Solid Waste Management
- Sustainable Infrastructure & Natural Areas
- Natural Resources & Habitat Preservation
- Health & Wellness

The goals and recommendations outlined in this plan are organized by individual plan element as described above, and contain information along a consistent structure for each element. The various sections of each plan element are described below.

Objective:

A description of the overall intent of the specific plan element. Where available, this objective coincides with the description established in the PDOP Sustainability Standards.

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025:

Identifies goals, new initiatives, or programs that should be implemented within the defined time period to further the sustainability program across both Departments and assist in meeting the standards set forth in the Park District's Sustainability Standards. We are looking to transition this plan into a Carbon Neutral Plan with defined carbon reduction goals and strategies.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives:

Examples of existing programs, policies, or initiatives already taking place within the Park District of Oak Park in support of the plan element and associated objectives or goals.

Indicators:

Metrics or other indicators of progress used to assess achievement of sustainability goals and objectives outlined in the Sustainability Standards.

*Recommended initiatives for future investigation and/or implementation for each plan element are found in Appendix A.

Addressing the Park District of Oak Park's Sustainability Standards

The PDOP's Sustainability Standards identifies the need for a biennial Sustainability Plan to establish goals and prioritize recommendations in support of sustainability across the organization, within the local community, as well as regionally. The Sustainability Standards also identifies specific goals and strategies across numerous work areas that, at a minimum, the Sustainability Plan should address.

All goals and strategies outlined in the Sustainability Standards are, at a minimum, reflected in this Sustainability Plan. Where goals and strategies listed in the plan reference specific elements of the practice, the individual section/subsections where the goal or strategy can be found in the practice is denoted in the plan. These references are made in the Sustainability Plan sections, 'Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025' or 'Supporting Policies, Programs or Initiatives,' for each plan element.

Sustainability Plan

Employee Education, Training, & Engagement

Objective: The Employee Education, Training, and Engagement element of the Sustainability Plan strives to ensure that agency staff is provided with the necessary training and education to support sustainability initiatives and environmental awareness as well as ensure expectations for performance related to sustainability goals are understood across both Departments. PDOP Sustainability Standards highlights the goals of the element.

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Identify training priorities and opportunities related to sustainability within various work programs across all Departments.
 - a. Develop and implement multimodal opportunities (e.g. workshops, presentations, written materials, etc.) for staff to gain greater environmental awareness and understanding of sustainability initiatives and expectations within the agency.
2. Implement employee challenges to engage staff in learning about sustainable practices (e.g. energy or waste reduction challenges).
3. Expand efforts to provide hands-on training opportunities to help staff fine-tune techniques and equipment selection to minimize pesticide application and to save time (examples include controlled burns, use of backpack sprayers, use of hand-held tools for weed removal).
4. Develop and provide targeted training for in-house and contracted custodial staff regarding waste management and recycling priorities within both Departments.
5. In conjunction with our staff's Environmental Committee, coordinate with Human Resources to develop sustainability goals, standards, and strategies for inclusion in staff performance evaluations.
6. Identify and strive to meet criteria to achieve sustainability-related credentials for the agency.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- The Environmental Committee coordinates an annual In-Service Training (IST) each winter for staff. The educational program features a variety of topics, including sustainability and

environmental awareness programming.

- The Parks Department offers training on how to document and properly track the use of pesticides and alternative pest management strategies.
- The Environmental Committee will provide training at the All Staff meetings to engage all levels of staff to participate in recycling efforts.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Number and type of education, training, and engagement opportunities made available to staff about sustainability-related topics (by fiscal year). Information should be collected on the:
 - topic (brief description),
 - date of event or distribution,
 - format (e.g. presentation, written material, workshop),
 - time spent in training,
 - target audience, and
 - number of staff participants.

Community/Patrons Education & Engagement

Objective: Foster sustainability efforts through agency-wide promotion and education of environmental awareness and conservation to the community and park patrons.

The Community and Patrons Education and Engagement element is lightly addressed and there are few existing policies, procedures, or implementation plans that address Community and Patrons Education and Engagement. There are existing programs and platforms throughout both the Parks and the Recreation Departments that engage and educate the community and park patrons on the topics of environmental awareness and conservation.

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to engage with the public on issues of sustainability and strategies to inform the public about sustainability initiatives. The communication plan may include website development, local newspaper, magazine articles, social media, and/or special events.
2. Collaborate with other local agencies, organizations, and volunteer groups on events or educational opportunities to promote environmental awareness and encourage healthy lifestyles.
3. Include sustainability-related information in customer packets (e.g. regarding recycling etc.) for facility rentals by the public.
4. Develop 'EcoEvent' standards for events held by the public, private groups, and Park District events to encourage thoughtful planning and implementation of events that promotes environmental awareness and reduces environmental impact.
5. Offer more educational classes available to the public on sustainability and nature.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- ❖ The Park District operates two nature centers (Austin Gardens Environmental Education

Center and Oak Park Conservatory). Each of these facilities provides quality hands-on educational opportunities for the public of all ages to connect visitors with the natural and cultural resources found locally.

- ❖ The PDOP works with partners to host Green Events such as the Frank Lloyd Wright Race, FallFest, Concerts in the Park and Festival Theatre.
- ❖ Add Park District programs such as prairie gardening, creating rain gardens, attracting butterflies to your yard, bird sheltering, etc.
- ❖ Develop a brochure that specifically promotes the PDOP's natural areas and distribute within the parks, schools, libraries, village hall.
- ❖ The public are encouraged to participate in volunteer activities and events that provide engagement with environmental issues and nature. The TreeKeeper program educates volunteers on the identification and management of trees.
- ❖ The PDOP website has a link to the GIS tree database that has the location and information on all of the trees in the park system which is available to the public.
- ❖ The PDOP has engaged in local schools to tag the trees in the parks for more educational opportunities and to educate the park users on types of trees.
- ❖ There is a memorial tree program available that residents can purchase which will add to the tree inventory. A new tree can be planted for their memorial and placed by Park District staff.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Number and type of education, training, and engagement opportunities made available to the public about sustainability-related topics (by fiscal year). Information should be collected on the:
 - topic (brief description) and format (e.g. presentation, written material, workshop),
 - date of event or distribution,
 - target audience, and number of staff participants.
- ❖ Number of participants engaged in various volunteer opportunities related to environmental issues and nature.
- ❖ Documentation of the number of residents volunteering to grow and manage native plants at our Oak Park Conservatory for our parks.
- ❖ The number of trees purchased for planting through the memorial tree program.

Utility/Energy Conservation

Objective: Conserve natural and fiscal resources by eliminating waste, improving energy efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and increasing the use of renewable energy resources. Whenever feasible, new appliances and building materials should meet Energy Star or equivalent ratings for high efficiency and energy conservation. This should be in addition to considering other environmental attributes such as recyclability and applicable Federal/State safety and building code requirements. Utility/Energy conservation strategies outlined in this section include:

- Utility Measurement and Monitoring
- Conservation of Electricity and Natural Gas
- Management of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems
- Utilization of Technological Improvements
- Renewable Energy Resources

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Utilize our greenhouse gas inventory to create a Carbon Neutral Plan.
2. Buildings Supervisor to run utility usage reports from the Mpower database 2-4 times per year. Information will be reviewed and used to develop/enhance utility management standards for facilities. This data will also be offered to Department Directors to increase awareness of utility usage and facilitate discussion/action related to utility saving practices.
3. Survey building envelope conditions and develop schedules for upgrades.
4. In addition to established internal maintenance programs, Departments should continue pursuing grants for energy efficiency studies, upgrades, and retrofits for planned and existing facilities.
5. Work toward meeting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) (silver or equivalent standard) to guide operations and maintenance at all facilities.
6. Perform an electrical capacity analysis to determine needs for electrification of facilities.
7. Identify opportunities for installation of renewable energy systems at existing park facilities (including but not limited to wind, solar, geothermal, etc.)
8. Change out gas water heaters with electrical heat pump HWT.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- All new buildings/facilities included in the capital budget should be constructed to a LEED Silver standard or greater. New buildings to be all-electric design as well.
- Where practical, indoor and outdoor lighting fixtures are fitted with programmable or occupancy/motion sensors.
- All lights to be light-emitting diodes (LEDs), daylight fixtures, or other efficient low-energy lighting solutions are used in place of incandescent, halogen, or fluorescent lights.
- Where practical, renewable sources (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal etc.) of energy are considered for new and replacement systems.
- High efficiency heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems that meet EnergyStar or equivalent standards are installed in all new and retrofit construction projects. Additionally, exposed piping and ventilation ducts are insulated to LEED Silver or equivalent standards. Facility thermostats are replaced with programmable, and oftentimes Wi-Fi-enabled, units. LEED Silver or equivalent standard insulation material is installed at new facilities and major renovations.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Annual electricity and natural gas usage across both Departments (per fiscal year).
- ❖ Percent of electricity produced or supported through renewable sources.
- ❖ Number of facilities outfitted with high-efficiency lighting (interior and/or exterior), and/or number of facilities outfitted with programmable occupancy/motion sensors for lighting. A database should be developed to track these improvements.
- ❖ Number of locations utilizing renewable energy resources (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal, etc.). A database should be developed to track these improvements.
- ❖ Number of locations utilizing high-efficiency heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), meeting EnergyStar or equivalent standards. A database should be developed to track these improvements.
- ❖ Number of facilities outfitted with programmable thermostats for heating/air conditioning. A database should be developed to track these improvements.

Water Conservation & Management

Objective: Conserve natural and fiscal resources by eliminating waste, improving efficiency, reducing water consumption, and seeking out opportunities to collect, store, and use non-potable sources of water including grey water and stormwater runoff for targeted applications.

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Investigate, and where feasible, install infrastructure for use of rainwater or greywater at PDOP facilities, including water amenities and landscape watering.
2. Continue installation of a Wi-Fi irrigation control system to more accurately set irrigation schedules and adjust the system remotely.
3. Staff will run water usage reports from the MPower database 2-4 times per year. Information will be reviewed and used to identify and address abnormalities due to leaks or other inefficiencies, and to develop/enhance water utility management standards for facilities. These data will also be offered to Department Directors to increase awareness of water utility usage and facilitate discussion/action related to water consumption reduction.
4. Evaluate planting sites to increase use of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants best suited for long-term survival under the existing growing conditions at each site.
5. Select improved turfgrass types (e.g. tall fescue, bluegrass, bermudagrass), and reduce the square footage where possible (while maintaining pervious area), to minimize mowing and irrigation frequency. This is to include native low-mow or no-mow areas that are drought tolerant.
6. Pilot the use of soil moisture sensor technology for better management of irrigated ballfields. Soil moisture sensors are one strategy to improve ballfield condition through targeted and controlled water applications.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- Low-flow or water-saving plumbing fixtures are installed in all new building/facility construction, and during significant retrofit of existing facilities. This includes automatic faucets, shower heads, low-flow toilets etc.

- The Oak Park Conservatory has a 350 gallon cistern that uses water from a water pump play feature and re-uses it for drip irrigation. There is also a system that collects some of the roof runoff rain water and is used to irrigate the plants grown in the greenhouse – reducing demand on potable water resources. Three new 1500 gallon cisterns were installed in 2018 to capture rain water and is used to water plants in the greenhouses.
- In 2016, Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center (AGEEC) installed a 1,500 gallon capacity above ground cistern to collect rainwater from the roof. The water, following filtration and treatment, is used to flush the toilets in the facility. Any excess water runs into two nearby rain gardens, keeping all storm water on site.
- In 2016, The Longfellow center had a 9,000 gallon above ground cistern installed to collect water from the roof and splash pad which is re-used to irrigate the ballfield. This cistern saves nearly 500,000 gallons of water per year.
- In 2017, the PDOP installed a 7,500 gallon cistern underground that will use water from the splash pad and re-use it to irrigate the ballfield. This will save an estimated 425,000 gallons of water per year.
- Install new water fountains in the park with bottle fill devices to help encourage the use of re-usable containers.
- Look for opportunities to work with the Village of Oak Park to install BioSwales or Rain Gardens to reduce stormwater runoff into the Village storm sewer system.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Annual volume of water used across the Park District (per fiscal year).
- ❖ Number of sites utilizing rainwater or greywater at PDOP facilities. A database should be developed to track these improvements.
- ❖ Number of native trees, shrubs, rain gardens, green roofs, no-mow or low-mow areas, herbaceous plants utilized in park projects, and landscaping.
- ❖ Characterization and quantification (where available) of the impact of advanced and new technology and strategies for better targeting water applications through irrigation (e.g. WiFi controls, use of soil moisture sensors etc.).
- ❖ Number of water fountains installed with bottle fill option. A database should be developed to track these improvements.

Fleet Management

Objective: Conserve natural and fiscal resources by eliminating waste, improving efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and increasing the use of renewable energy resources. Review vehicle efficiency standards, operating procedures, and best management practices. Evaluate greenhouse gas emission standards and compliance with Federal/State/Local guidelines. Fleet management strategies outlined in this section include:

- Utility Measurement and Monitoring
- Conservation of Fuel
- Management of Vehicle and Maintenance Equipment
- Utilization of Technology Improvements
- Utilization of Alternative Energy Resources

- Use of Alternative Commuting Resources

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Develop strategies for encouraging employees utilizing the PDOP fleet vehicles to carpool to off-site trainings and conferences.
2. In coordination with the Fleet Manager, conduct functional assessments for vehicle selection/purchasing based on work program requirements, accounting for fuel/energy efficiency, safety, and effective operation. Continuously review vehicle assignments to ensure the most efficient use of the agency's fleet.
3. Continue use of bio-diesel in all diesel vehicles and equipment.
4. Work to expand the percentage of hybrid, electric, and/or alternatively fueled vehicles in the fleet.
5. Develop an anti-idling administrative practice for the vehicle and equipment fleet. Develop an educational campaign for staff about the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting air quality through elimination of idling. Use Fleetmatics software to look at reports on idling in our fleet vehicles.
6. As practical, expand use of meeting and conferencing technology used by staff (e.g. phone and video conferencing technology) to reduce vehicle use and travel time.
8. Begin investigating the potential for inclusion of compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles to the fleet. This may require coordination with Village of Oak Park for the use of Village CNG fueling stations.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- To maintain highest operating efficiency, vehicles receive regular maintenance that is consistent with manufacturers specifications.
- The agency owns and operates two busses and a minivan to use for carpooling staff to off-site locations.
- The agency installed fleet technology (Fleetmatics), in all its vehicles to monitor travel routes, distance and idling.
- The agency will continue to look into alternative fuel vehicles as options become available.
- The agency maintains efforts for recycling batteries, waste oil, tires, antifreeze, scrap metal, and contaminated fuel.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Number of gallons of gasoline and biodiesel fuel utilized per fiscal year.
- ❖ Percent of total fleet inventory that is hybrid/electric or alternatively fueled.
- ❖ Number of staff utilizing vanpool and carpool opportunities for commuting to work. Information should be collected on the:
 - mileage of each vanpool or carpool per day,
 - average number of staff utilizing vanpool or carpool resources,
 - number of miles traveled by regular users of vanpool or carpool from their home to work.
- ❖ Number of staff utilizing telework and compressed work schedule. Number of staff participating in and using transit modes other than single-occupancy vehicles commuting to and from work.

Sustainable Acquisition & Use of Agency Supplies

Objective: Develop procurement specifications that encourage the use of goods and services which support the agency's commitment to sustainability in areas including, but not limited to, resource conservation, protection of the environment, and workplace health and safety. Agency supply strategies outlined in this section include:

- Office Supplies and Furniture
- Printing and Copying
- Procurement

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Continue to offer opportunities via periodic email notifications for reuse of durable equipment, including furniture to staff for reuse and/or repurposing by other PDOP facilities.
2. Provide guidance to staff on the proper disposal or external surplus/recycling of PDOP property when reuse or repurposing is no longer feasible within the organization.
3. Establish standards for environmentally preferable cleaning products and supplies that are effective, enhance worker safety and health, and meet or exceed Federal/State safety requirements.
4. Expand on printing and copying reduction measures, and encourage strategies for going paperless. Work closely with Information Technology (IT) to ensure print functions on individual computers default to double-sided and leader sheets are disabled.
5. Continue promoting the use of digital applications such as ePlans (View plans via PDF), web-based meeting and conference technology, and digital database systems to support projects and initiatives across the agency.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- Existing office supplies are stored in central areas and include both new items as well as returned inventory for re-use.
- Unless a specific job or machine requires otherwise, all printers make use of 100% post-consumer recycled paper preferably with chlorine-free processing. Purchased printer paper is also limited to those that are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified.
- PDOP has established a Purchasing Policy allowing staff to pay up to 10% more money for Green Certified Products.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Number of laptops utilized by staff versus desktop computers.
- ❖ Number and type of education, training, and engagement opportunities made available to staff about paper reduction strategies (per fiscal year).
- ❖ Percent of sustainable/green-content preferred office supplies and print production paper purchased.
- ❖ Contracts for facility cleaning must include certified eco-friendly cleaners and cleaning practices for staff care of varied facility surfaces in buildings.

Recycling & Solid Waste Management

Objective: Implement projects and programs to reduce solid waste, reuse, and recycle materials used by PDOP employees and patrons, and strive to meet or exceed the regulatory mandates established by government regulations. Meet the Village of Oak Park's goal set through PlanItGreen's Sustainability Report Card is to hit a 50% waste diversion rate by 2030. Recycling and disposal of materials shall comply with relevant Federal/State safety regulations.

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Continue and improve upon the recycling pilot program at staffed facilities as an effort to increase recycling rates.
2. Continue to make progress toward the Village of Oak Park's waste diversion goal of 50% by 2030 for mandatory recycling products (mixed paper, commingled materials, yard trim, scrap metal, shrubs and fallen trees).
3. Seek out recycling opportunities for other products used widely across the organization and establish guidance for the recycling of those materials.
4. Seek out improved opportunities and resources such as Waste Management's "Streamline Program", including improvements to recording, tracking, and monitoring of waste & recycling for landfill material, yard trim, brush, and other vegetation used to produce compost, mulch, wood chips, and topsoil. This program would be operated by the Department of Parks and would provide material to support numerous operational needs. With the recent local tree loss due to disease from Emerald Ash Borer and Dutch Elm Disease, the PDOP has been milling the trees and re-using them. Establish a procedure for quantifying the amount of milled lumber and tracking the end-use products constructed.
6. Participate as a stakeholder in support of the Seven Generations Ahead and Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation's effort to further develop the "Zero Waste Communities" project.
7. Continue to develop and support the Recycling & Composting program at all staffed facilities.
 - a. Establish a unified approach for disposing of various materials/products and provide this information as a resource to assist staff when making decisions about waste disposal.
8. Develop educational tools and events for staff as well as the community to encourage and demonstrate best practices related to recycling, reuse, and reduction of waste.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- "Recycling Captains" at each staffed facility work to ensure recycling at their site is conveniently located for users, provides consistent messaging with informational stickers on bins and posters, and that recycling and trash bins are co-located as much as practical to provide users ample opportunity to make correct choices in waste disposal.
- The agency participates in voluntary recycling and reuse programs for materials including but not limited to vehicle fluids and oil, batteries, asphalt, tires, furniture, computers and other electronics, tires, furniture, and construction debris etc. This is done in conjunction with the Village of Oak Park.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Tonnage of solid waste material (trash), mandatory recyclable material (mixed paper, commingled

materials, scrap metal, yard trim (compost)), and voluntary recyclable materials generated by all Departments (separated by material type).

- ❖ Percentage of mandatory materials recycled versus solid waste material disposed as trash. Exact tonnage (quantity) of raw materials brought to the Davis Tree Care yard for recycling into compost, mulch, wood chips, and topsoil.
- ❖ Amount of lumber milled from local trees and characterization of the end-use products constructed.
- ❖ Number of staff participating in the Recycling program.

Sustainable Infrastructure & Natural Areas

Objective: The PDOP will utilize National and State standards for green practices in the design of facilities and in the management of natural resources. Sustainable infrastructure and natural areas strategies outlined in this section include:

- Sustainable Building
- Sustainable Site Work
- Community Planning and Development

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Develop policy to, where appropriate, incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or equivalent standards in construction and renovation for small building projects.
2. Where appropriate, continue incorporating sustainability goals, practices, and products (using LEED and The Sustainable SITES Initiative or equivalent standards as guidance) into capital improvement plans, new facility plans and ongoing design projects, standard park construction specifications and details, and in park design guidelines.
3. Develop and roll out a Natural Resource Management Plan.
4. Establish guidance for the planting and maintenance of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants best suited for long-term survival under the existing growing conditions at each individual site around agency-owned buildings. Develop a Natural Resource Plan to guide staff.
5. Continue implementing sustainable turfgrass practices in all turf areas at both PDOP and D97 sites.
6. Compile reference lists of product vendors, and guidance for sustainably sourced or produced materials for commonly used site construction materials, site furnishings, product manufacturers, and plant nurseries. This reference list may include materials/products that are locally available, made from recycled/reclaimed materials, etc.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- All new construction or major renovation of PDOP buildings equal to or greater than 5,000 square feet are required to be constructed to at least LEED Silver or equivalent standard.
- Whenever feasible and appropriate, capital improvement plans include implementation of at least LEED Silver eligibility or equivalent standards, or incorporate sustainable elements as appropriate to the specific site and project.
- When planning new park sites, consideration is given to locations that offer access to public transportation resources such as metro rail, trains, buses, biking and carpools.
- PDOP will adhere to environmental requirements for use of best practices and environmental site design (ESD) to avoid, trap, and control erosion or surface runoff of detergents, fertilizers, pesticides,

and soil into storm drains and surface waters.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- Number of facilities or locations that have achieved at least LEED Silver (or equivalent standard) or Sustainable SITES designation.
- Characterization of the types of sustainable elements incorporated into small facilities or locations not seeking LEED or Sustainable SITES designation (per fiscal year).

Natural Resources & Habitat Preservation

Objective: The PDOP will utilize National and State standards for green practices in the management of natural resources. Natural areas will be managed to maintain healthy ecosystems and maximize biodiversity with a focus on:

- Natural Resources Management
- MWRD Permit Requirements, Stormwater Management
- Forest and Tree Canopy Conservation and Preservation
- Environmentally Sensitive and Unique Habitats

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. PDOP will continue to utilize and expand the use of GIS-based technology, including mobile GIS applications to allow for the collection, maintenance, and assessment of data collected in support of natural resources stewardship.
 - a. Continue conducting active inventory of individual urban trees in developed parks, tracked by park, using mobile GIS applications. Assessments conducted include size, species, and tree health with the goal of improved identification and tracking of tree pest issues, tree maintenance needs, and assessment of species diversity and size class.
2. Assess parkland areas as they relate to priority areas for tree canopy enhancement county-wide. Prioritize tree planting, as appropriate, in priority areas with a focus on promoting, tree health, and species diversity.
3. TreeKeeper group development and pilot to prune trees in parks beyond the standard two-year maintenance contract as an effort to improve tree health, structural integrity, and promote individual tree sustainability within the landscape, with the intention of reducing the work program for mature tree maintenance as a long-term goal.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- Current GIS database houses all tree inventories and condition rating.
- The Department of Parks manages a non-native invasive plant program which inventories, assesses, and controls non-native invasive plants across parkland. This work includes management of the Weed Warrior Volunteer program which educates and engages the public on non-native invasive plant identification and management through coordinated events county-wide.
- Contracted management of native areas including burns and manual weeding at Lindberg Park, Taylor Park, Mills Park and Austin Gardens.

- As an effort to protect the environment and ensure safety of employees and park patrons, the PDOP acts responsibly in the handling, storage, and application of pesticides and fertilizers. The agency adheres to all Federal, State and County regulations governing pesticide and fertilizer storage, use and disposal. Also, PDOP prohibits pesticide use within 50 feet of playgrounds, children facilities. An integrated pest management decision-making process is utilized in other park areas to determine if pest suppression is needed, what method or combination of methods is needed, when control should be implemented, and where control should be targeted. The GAC (Greening Advisory Committee) assists in reviewing the IPM and researching alternative weed control measures.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Frequency and types of management strategies employed and acreage of non-native invasive plant treatment area in designated Best Natural Areas, Biodiversity Areas, or other parkland areas.
- ❖ Tracking of fertilizer and pesticide applications in EAM.
- ❖ Number of developed PDOP parks that have been inventoried to characterize trees and related information using the mobile GIS tree inventory application.
- ❖ Number of young trees pruned to establish good structure and health for long-term sustainability in the landscape. Optimal number of trees pruned per year will be established once a cycle is complete, number will reflect every tree pruned on an established cycle with the development of an optimum cycle for sustainable canopy in the parks.
- ❖ Percentage of parks where young tree pruning was completed to meet optimum cycle.

Health & Wellness

Objective: Promote safety, health, and wellness through our workplace, programs, and services.

Recommended Focus Areas January 2024 – December 2025

1. Make connections between environmental health and human health in training offerings, educational materials, and program offerings related to sustainability.
2. Increase access to health programing.
3. Work with the Wellness Committee to add staff and community items for focus.

Supporting Programs, Policies, or Initiatives

- An annual Fitness Week is coordinated annually that provides a designated number of Administrative Leave hours for staff to participate in scheduled events across the parks to encourage health, fitness, and wellness of employees.
- Support recognition of the importance of health and wellness in documents such as Park Master Plans.
- Mental Health Awareness Month is observed each May, and during that time, a series of educational sessions and support programs are provided for staff on topics ranging from depression, grief and loss, stress, among other mental health topics.
- All employees are required to participate in a Defensive Driving course prior to operating Commission vehicles.
- Health and safety incident claims data are reviewed annually, quarterly, and monthly to assess risk, identify trends, and to analyze frequency and severity of accidents, injuries and/or property damage.

These data are used to help target future training and inspection activities. The Risk Management Manager performs accident investigations, complaint investigations, routine and/or targeted inspections, and safety training for staff.

- Workplace hazards are mitigated through timely identification, investigation and remedial action.

Indicators

Indicators of progress for this plan element include the following:

- ❖ Number and type of opportunities or events made available to staff to promote health, safety, and wellness (by fiscal year). Information should be collected on the:
 - ❖ topic (brief description),
 - ❖ date of event or distribution,
 - ❖ format (e.g. presentation, written material, workshop, event),
 - ❖ target audience, and
 - ❖ number of staff participants.

Additional Sustainability Resources

•TBD

Appendix A: Recommended Initiatives for Future Investigation/Implementation

Employee Education, Training, & Engagement

- Require key staff to attend a minimum number of events about sustainability (workshops, presentations etc.)
- Ensure staff is informed about current and changing sustainability initiatives and how these may impact specific work programs. This communication will be followed up with appropriate training when necessary.
- Develop methods to accurately transfer knowledge between divisions and departments.
- Promote opportunities for competition or challenges among work sections or between all departments as methods to educate, engage and motivate staff on issues of sustainability.

Community and Patrons Education & Engagement

- Add green tips in the PDOP social media outlets
- Place sustainability messages in the PDOP brochures for consumption by the general public.
- Compile information on the internal efforts of PDOP to make the organization more sustainable and package that information for public and patron consumption.
- Review possibility of a community-wide event focused on sustainability.

Utility/Energy Conservation

- Renewable energy, such as solar, wind and geothermal, should be considered for new and replacement systems where life cycle cost savings are justified to further reduce the PDOP's carbon footprint and further promote clean power alternatives wherever practical.

- Insulate exposed piping and ventilation ducts in accordance with at least LEED Silver or equivalent standard.
- Improve attic insulation in all centers to meet/exceed current energy code.
- Each facility will provide an annual report of its implementation plan ensuring that energy resources are used effectively. These plans should be kept in MPower for review.

Water Conservation & Management

- Track unavoidable temporary water usage increases and compare with overall water consumption trends using MPower to help identify the water usage increases that may indicate leaks or water usage inefficiencies that may be corrected.
- Require use of new automatic irrigation systems with off-site access to manage water usage.
- Identify new water conservation practices or technologies and develop policies and practices that govern their use.
- Add agenda item in landscaping meetings to evaluate the issues surrounding use of native plantings and reduction of lawn areas.
- Provide additional resources for staff training on proper landscape planting care techniques.
- Continue to look at re-purposing water for re-use.

Fleet Management

- Reduce overall fuel consumption by 5% annually through route planning (telematics), idle limitation, carpooling, etc.
- Utilize GPS trackers on fleet vehicles to capture data on vehicle use and travel patterns. These data can be used to further ensure safe driving practices, reduce wear and tear on vehicles, reduce fuel costs and mitigate workplace hazards.
- Investigate alternative fuel vehicles.

Sustainable Acquisition & Use of Agency Supplies

- Reduce the use of plastic water bottles and install water fountains with bottle fill feature.
- Compost green waste using existing park facilities.
- Monitor activities with Village of Oak Park to piggyback or utilize opportunities for shared- resources.
- Further study is required both with Xerox and vendors of stand-alone print equipment for best practice regarding use of FSC Certified paper.

Recycling & Solid Waste Management

- Establish waste reduction and recycling program language in all center manuals.
- Install consistent recycling stations and signage in all centers. Communicate and train cleaning crews.
- Enter and track waste bills in MPower.
- Work to identify new goals with the GAC.

Sustainable Infrastructure & Natural Areas

- Monitor performance of sustainable practices over time and publish results either on website or MPower.
- Create new area in the Capital Improvements Program to fund retrofits to existing facilities to incorporate sustainable practices (such as photovoltaic panels on buildings), bioswales, rain gardens, water re-use, native plantings, etc.
- Ensure preventative maintenance work requests provide for specialty sustainable equipment and products.

Natural Resources & Habitat Preservation

- Work with the Conservatory and GAC to add future goals for this area.
- Establish a crew dedicated to tree rings and sucker pruning. This will be for hand weeding, creating and maintaining mulch rings.

Health & Wellness

- Work with the newly formed Health and Wellness Committee to add future goals and programs in 2018-2019