



**CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK  
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP  
REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, March 12, 2026  
6:00 PM

Highland Park City Hall, Pre-Session Conference Room  
1707 St. Johns Avenue  
Highland Park, Illinois

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

In accordance with the Statutes of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Highland Park, a Meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Group of the City of Highland Park is scheduled to be held at the hour of 6:00 PM on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at the City of Highland Park City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois, during which it is anticipated there will be a discussion of the following:

Individuals with questions or feedback about an agenda item can address the Advisory Group in the following ways:

1. **EMAILS FOR THE RECORD.** Email the Sustainability Advisory Group staff liaison, Sustainability Manager, Austin Knight at [aknight@cityhpil.com](mailto:aknight@cityhpil.com). If you wish to have your comments read into the record, limit your communication to 200 words or less. Public comments received by 3:00 PM the day of the meeting will be read under Business from the Public. Public comments should contain the following information:
  - In the subject line, identify, "SAG Meeting – Read into the Record"
  - Name, Address, City Phone (optional)
  - Topic or agenda item number of interest
  - Organization or agency representing, if applicable
2. **EMAILS WITH UNLIMITED INFORMATION.** Individuals who do not wish to have their comments read into the record can email Sustainability Manager Austin Knight an unlimited number of words. Emails will be forwarded to the Sustainability Advisory Group if requested.
3. **TELEPHONE.** Individuals with no access to email may leave a message with Sustainability Manager Austin Knight at 847.926.1037 by 3:00PM day of meeting.
4. **LIVE COMMENTS.** Individuals are able to address the Commission/Advisory Group during the meeting. Questions/comments are limited to written testimony into the record or spoken comments, not both. Comments should be limited to three minutes or less.

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**MEETING AGENDA**

**Call to Order**

**I. Roll Call**

**II. Approval of Minutes**

- January 8, 2026 Regular Meeting

**III. Business from the Public**

**V. New Business**

- (a) Staff Report: Leaf Blower Feasibility Study
- (b) Introduction of New Member
- (c) Discussion: Sustainability Plan
- (d) Discussion: Working Groups
- (e) Discussion: Green Business Recognition

- (f) Introduction to Recycle Coach, Hefty ReNew, Climate Coach, and All-In Composting
- (g) Discussion: Sustainability Sunday Posts

**VI. Other Business**

- (a) City Staff Update
- (b) Chairman Update
- (c) Advisor Comments

**VII. Adjournment**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY GROUP OF  
THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS**

**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, January 8, 2026

**MEETING LOCATION:** Pre-Session Conference Room – Highland Park City Hall  
1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois

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**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

At 6:02 PM, Chair Futterman called the Sustainability Advisory Group (“SAG”) meeting to order and Sustainability Manager Knight called the roll.

Advisors Present: Chair Futterman, Klee, Donart, Reinstein, Goldstone, and Rosenblatt

Advisors Absent: Wesslund

Staff Present: Assistant City Manager Jason, Sustainability Manager Knight

Also Present: Student Advisor Hoobler

Chair Futterman reminded Advisors of best practices from Robert’s Rules and reviewed decorum standards for meetings.

**MINUTES**

**(a) Approval of the October 20, 2025 Sustainability Advisory Group Special Meeting Minutes**

Advisor Klee moved to approve the minutes. Chair Futterman seconded the motion. Voice vote, unanimous. Chair Futterman declared the motion passed.

**BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**a) Introduction of New Members and Staff**

Chair Futterman asked Advisors to introduce themselves and share the reason they were interested in joining the Sustainability Advisory Group (SAG). Those present took turns introducing themselves and discussing their sustainability interests and what they hope to contribute to SAG.

**b) Brief Overview of Sustainability Plan and Work Plan**

Chair Futterman gave an overview of the sustainability plan and the goals laid out in it. He talked about how Advisors should find things on the plan that appealed to them and to use it as a guidepost for SAG’s work.

Chair Futterman then discussed the SAG Work Plan and how it laid out the Advisory Group's objectives for 2026 while still giving flexibility.

Advisor Klee asked for the 2026 Work Plan to be updated to reflect the new advisors. ACM Jason explained that the list of Advisors on the Work Plan reflects who was on the SAG when it was approved by Council. The current Advisors will be included on the 2027 Work Plan document.

**c) Discussion: HP Environmental Award**

ACM Jason explained reviewed the Highland Park Awards and SAGs role in contributing feedback for Council in their decision making as it relates to the Environmental Award. She reminded Advisors that discussion this evening was not for SAG to vote or have consensus on a nominee, rather to review the applications received and provide an opportunity for Advisors to contribute their thoughts and experiences with nominees for the good of the group. Each Advisor is tasked with providing individual input for each applicant, submitted in an online form. That input as well as a summary of the SAG group discussion will then be provided to the City Council for their consideration before they ultimately vote on whom to bestow the award. ACM Jason also noted that if anyone wants to volunteer to assist with the HP Awards night to please let her know. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. ACM Jason proceeded to go over highlights for nominees Samir Pelinkovic and Heather and Colin Cosgrove. ACM Jason also noted that LRS was also nominated however due to their services being contracted by the City they are not eligible for the award.

Chair Futterman reminded Advisors they are not voting on a winner, but that if anyone had feedback they can provide it now. Discussion ensued between the Advisors and Student Advisor on the nominations before them. Discussion included the following:

- Cosgrove's achievements felt more realistic to what an average resident can do.
- Consideration of the award is to being for a relatable achievement or one on a larger scale.
- The inspiration provided by Red Oak's Youth Garden.
- Pelinkovic's nomination reflects an impressive scale.
- The Cosgrove's work impacting the next generation.
- Impact of similar green growers program at Ravinia Elementary School and that ingraining these habits early on is easier than trying to do so later in life.
- Cosgrove's work impacting kids and the community and how it encourages sustainable behaviors.

Sustainability Manager Knight will resend the link to the individual nomination reviews for Advisors to complete.

**d) Discussion and Updates: Working Groups**

Chair Futterman brought up that SAG only meets 6 times a year and they wouldn't get much work done if they limit themselves to these meetings. He said working groups are a way for Advisors to address their passions and accomplish more in-between SAG meetings. He discussed the working groups from last year as examples and past accomplishments by SAG such as the Speaker Series, tabling, electric vehicle car show, etc. Chair Futterman then talked about the tools SAG have in Sustainability Sunday, Climate Coach, and others that can be created. Said working groups don't have to be determined now, but that the groups are meant to determine SAG wants to direct their energy.

Advisor Goldstone said much of this is communication and that her past work dealt in writing blogs for Lake County to showcase what the County were doing. That it was important for the City to get their actions and SAG's out into people's eyes, so she is interested in helping with communications.

Chair Futterman remarked that while they can advise on policy to council much of what they do is communications. He said the City and other government entities would keep doing what they can to impact the City, but much of what is going to be done will be by private residents. Chair Futterman then brought up the Green Alliance, the Climate Action Plan, and how the Alliance could create a unified brand that would be easily identifiable to residents.

SM Knight said the CAP is meant to be a more targeted plan with actions that addressed the largest contributors to the carbon footprint in addition adding resiliency to make the City further resilient to the climate change that is already projected to happen.

Advisor Donart discussed being excited about the cross-pollination between the jurisdictions specifically students and wanting to find more ways that SAG can amplify. She went on to talk about plastic reduction such as in play spaces and the plastic bag tax with how cross-pollination could play a role.

Advisor Klee proposed setting up a work group to address and offer a way for residents to offset their greenhouse gas use. Possibly using a donation function so residents that could take some sustainable actions especially if they cannot for reasons such as inability to put solar on their roof.

Chair Futterman agreed and said that if the City wanted to achieve net zero that they would need to offset some of the emissions.

Chair Futterman then reminded SAG he wants them to bring ideas not just second motions.

e) **Discussion: Sustainability Sunday Posts**

SM Knight explained Sustainability Sunday on how it could be on topics of interest for Advisors, about certain events, seasonally relevant tips, etc. via the AirTable platform.

Chair Futterman asked if they have content scheduled out to which ACM Jason confirmed.

Discussion ensued related to analytics of Sustainability posts, resident engagement, City social platforms, potential for creating a quarterly sustainability newsletter, other City communication modalities, and the City's communications plan.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

a) **City Staff Update**

SM Knight stated that the City got 5 bids for the RFP on the IL Energy Stretch Code. He then briefly explained stretch codes and what lead up to the RFP.

He spoke about how a new private electric vehicle charger was installed for the Police fleet with an EV for the Police Administrative Department expected sometime this year.

He then talked about the meeting with architects on the sustainability features for a potential renovation or rebuild of the Public Services building. ACM Jason said the building was in need of rebuild and that she and SM Knight are doing what they can to advocate for sustainability options. The City have asked for alternative green bids in addition to the norm when they can while meeting the needs of the staff working there.

SM Knight talked about the Climate Action Plan that is being developed with the intent to bring it back to SAG at a future meeting. That it would feature more targeted actions compared to the Sustainability Plan.

SM Knight stated that a multi-part speaker series is in the works on urban wildlife that should start in the spring.

He then shared that the MLK Day of Service Reuse-A-Shoe Drive was happening January 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 10:30am. ACM Jason expanded on it saying that it's a donation drop-off and how SAG was a partner last year where it went incredibly well. She then requested volunteers if anyone is available on the day to help or if they want to donate shoes as well. ACM Jason also discussed future volunteer opportunities for SAG to table at such as Arbor Day.

**b) Chair Update**

Chair Futterman said go Green Deerfield is having their monthly Green Drinks 6pm on January 21, 2026 with the sustainability manager from Deerfield being there to discuss their sustainability efforts.

He also talked about how a few weeks ago he used his first Hefty ReNew bag and while having mixed feelings it's better than going to the landfill.

**c) Advisor Comments**

Advisor Reinstein asked about solar at the Public Services building. ACM Jason said that was discussed in the meetings with the architect and due to building codes the roof would have to be made solar ready even if solar was not initially installed.

Advisor Reinstein talked about microforestry and is excited to see how he can influence through SAG the City to plant more non-decretive native flowers.

Advisor Donart talked about policy such as anti-idling and possibly having that be a working group.

Advisor Goldstone talked about their Bald Eagle sighting in Highland Park by the preserve near the school and that there was an Owl by the library.

Student Rep Hoobler noted he heard that in 2025 the world used more green energy than carbon energy but doesn't know if it's true.

Chair Futterman said he would like to meet with each advisor to get to know them better and see what motivated them.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Advisor Donart moved to adjourn Advisor Goldstone seconded the motion. Voice vote, unanimous. Chair Futterman declared the meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Austin Knight, SM

# SUSTAINABILITY PLAN UPDATE

## The Strategy for 2023-2027

### Mayor and City Council

Mayor Nancy R. Roterling  
Councilmember Anthony E. Blumberg  
Councilmember Jeff Hoobler  
Councilmember Annette Lidawer  
Councilmember Yumi Ross  
Councilmember Kim Stone  
Councilmember Andrés Tapia

### City Manager

Ghida S. Neukirch

### Department Directors

Ron Bannon – Public Works Director  
Joel Fontane – Community Development Director  
Erin K. Jason – Assistant City Manager  
Lou Jogmen – Police Chief  
Julie Logan – Finance Director  
Joe Schrage – Fire Chief  
Emily Taub – Assistant City Manager

### Sustainability Consultant

Kelly Shelton – Quercus Consulting

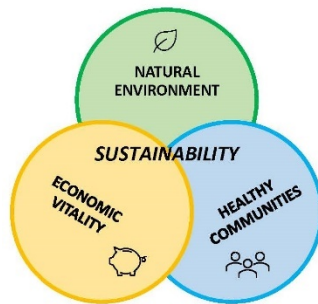
September 25, 2023



# OVERVIEW

The City of Highland Park is a municipal leader in sustainability initiatives within the Chicago metropolitan region. To achieve its sustainability objectives, numerous stakeholders must work together to provide input, resources, and solutions. The City's 2023-2027 Sustainability Plan serves as a guide for the City of Highland Park to further advance our community's environmental leadership. This plan focuses primarily on the accomplishments and actions of City government. However, the residents and businesses of Highland Park play a vital role in making our entire city sustainable.

While there are many detailed components that lend to the success of this plan, this written document aims to highlight the overarching themes, successes, goals and strategies.



Environmental sustainability includes making sure that human activity does not deplete or degrade the planet's resources. As the City of Highland Park continues its mission to become even more environmentally sustainable, our decisions impact neighboring communities, and their decisions impact Highland Park's residents and environment. To that end, a collaborative approach is necessary because healthy living extends beyond city limits.

The Sustainability Plan identifies the City's major sustainability accomplishments while charting the path for future sustainability efforts, goals, and budgeting for the years of 2023 through 2027.

The Sustainability Plan is organized into the following eight areas of focus:

- **Communication:** The City promotes sustainability initiatives and programs for residents and commercial entities in effective and impactful ways.
- **Economic Development:** The City provides resources and support to community businesses to increase their environmental sustainability.
- **Energy:** The City works to reduce greenhouse gas reduction emissions by increasing energy efficiency, and the use of renewable sources of energy.
- **Leadership:** The City commits to sustainability programs and initiatives including the Greenest Region Compact, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and other pledges.
- **Mobility:** The City strives to improve the bike and pedestrian network, encourage the use of public transportation, and increase the efficiency of the City fleet.
- **Natural Areas:** The City continues proactive stewardship of the natural environment by addressing critical natural areas in our community, including trees, ravines, bluffs and other habitats.
- **Waste Management:** The City leads efforts toward reducing total solid waste volumes and increasing participation in recycling and composting programs.
- **Water:** The City continues its leadership in protecting surface and groundwater sources and increasing water conservation.

This plan is a working document and is used in the day-to-day operations of the City. It is reviewed for progress regularly to ensure goals are being met and to seek solutions to challenges that hinder progress towards achieving specific goals. Please contact the City Manager's Office at 847.926.1000 with any questions about this Sustainability Plan or to discuss sustainability initiatives.



# BACKGROUND

The City of Highland Park issued its first Sustainability Plan in 2010 and since then it has implemented many of the recommended projects and policies. It has also embedded sustainable practices and procedures within its departments. Sustainability is truly a routine feature of many of Highland Park’s municipal operations.

In 2016, the City reviewed its unmet needs in the subjects touched by sustainability and developed a “short term strategic plan” to establish specific actions and targets for the years of 2017, 2018, and 2019.

For 2020, the plan was updated again by combining outstanding goals from previous plans and introducing new objectives from two independent resources:

- The Greenest Region Compact 2 (GRC2) – This is a valuable resource for municipal sustainability planning developed by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. It provides a comprehensive list of possible action items culled from over 150 sustainability plans.
- SolSmart - This is a non-profit program that provides recognition and no-cost technical assistance to help local governments reduce barriers to solar energy growth. SolSmart provides a comprehensive list of possible action items focused on enabling and encouraging adoption of solar power.

These sources were used to develop a long list of possible actions to advance sustainability in Highland Park. The version published in 2019, provided an updated assessment of the City’s accomplishments and explored objectives for 2020-2022. The update reflected feedback from the City Council, City staff, the Sustainability Advisory Group, the Green Alliance, and residents.



This current version provides an update of the City’s accomplishments and explores objectives to be implemented through 2027. This version also looks further ahead and incorporates long term plans through 2035.

## SUSTAINABILITY PLAN UPDATE The Strategy for 2020-2022

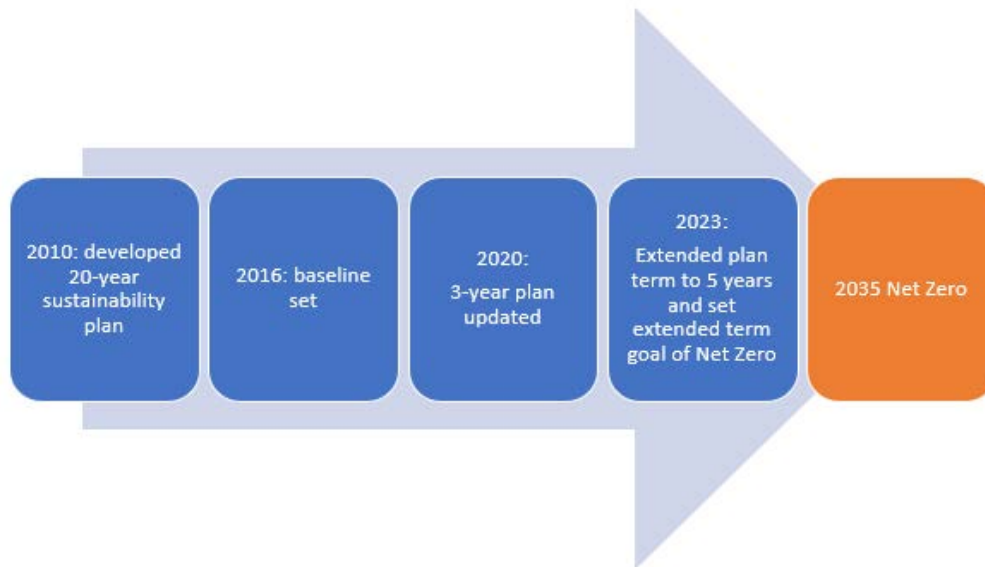
Funding sources for Sustainability Plan initiatives include the City’s Sustainability Fund -- which includes funds from the City’s refuse and recycling franchise fee, revenue from the Recycling Center, and funds from the Municipal Aggregation program. The City will also seek grants when possible to supplement other sources of funding.



# EXTENDED TERM (2035) SUSTAINABILITY OUTLOOK

**Statement: Highland Park will reduce greenhouse gas emissions<sup>1</sup> by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero carbon emissions<sup>2</sup> by 2035.**

Establishing an outlook beyond 2027 will enable Highland Park to put in place plans to be net zero by 2035. The net zero carbon emissions goal applies not just to City government buildings and facilities, but to all of Highland Park.



To move toward net zero emissions, Highland Park will convene stakeholders at least annually to discuss successes and opportunities. Stakeholders will include the City, sister governments, the business community and residents. Goals will be reviewed annually to encourage continuous improvement.

A holistic approach will incorporate all opportunities to be more sustainable -- including energy, waste, water and more – and involve the residential, commercial and industrial sectors.

The net zero vision includes the following:

- Generating electricity without emissions by increasing renewable energy
- Using electricity to power vehicles and equipment
- Increasing the efficiency of energy and water use
- Reducing waste and increasing recycling and composting

<sup>1</sup> Greenhouse gases are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities. Emissions reduction will involve reducing energy use, transportation and waste while increasing recycling and composting.

<sup>2</sup> Net zero carbon emissions is an ideal state where the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed. To achieve net zero, Highland Park will reduce emissions from energy, transportation and waste and increase recycling, composting, the use of renewables as well as additional initiatives such as electrification and increasing tree cover.

# COMMUNICATION

The City Council has indicated a preference for informing residents and businesses about opportunities to advance sustainability. Highland Park first addresses sustainability by informing residents and businesses about opportunities to advance environmental priorities collaboratively. This elevates the act of communicating and public education about sustainability into a prominent role in this strategic plan. Much of the work is coordinated by the City Manager's Office, with other departments and committees providing subject matter expertise.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- In 2020 the City adopted bird-friendly construction standards that require the City and its general contractors, agents, representative and subcontractors to incorporate to the greatest extent practicable bird-safe building materials and design features into the design of newly-constructed buildings to be used primarily by the City.
- Annual in-person and virtual activities were held to celebrate Arbor Day.
- The City informed residents about recycling and composting through its communication channels.



## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Reconvene the Green Alliance, a collaborative group of representatives from local governments and institutions such as the county, library, park district, school districts, township, hospital, and the business community.
- Promote sustainability with residents at festivals, lectures, workshops and other events, and expand food scrap composting participation at events hosted by Green Alliance organizations.
- Add more citywide sustainability actions to the searchable online map and continue promotion of the map for use by residents, businesses, and property owners.
- Compile year-end achievements on all tasks and measurable goals and draft annual citywide work plans in cooperation with the City's departments.
- Promote participation in the Solar Home tour combined with a showcase of electric vehicles.
- Develop targeted communication plan with a goal of reducing residential natural gas use.
- Incorporate sustainability issues into City communications on a regular basis.
- Continue to promote community solar, and opportunities for group purchasing discounts for solar and other renewable energy technologies.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Highland Park has a robust business environment with nine business districts, and the City Manager's Office Business Development Division conducts regular outreach with the City's business community. The City's role in engaging the local business community merits a meaningful approach toward promoting sustainability initiatives that can be undertaken by businesses, and also to assist with attaining the sustainability goals identified as desirable by the business community.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- In 2022, Lake County launched the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy ("C-PACE") financing program for clean energy and sustainability projects on commercial facilities.

## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Engage the Chamber in a discussion about its priorities and concerns of its member businesses. Specific to sustainability, the discussion will explore:
  - How the subject of sustainability can be used to promote local businesses.
  - How the City can recognize and support businesses that practice and promote sustainability, as well as local goods & services.
- Promote the environmental awards through its multiple communication platforms, including recognizing landscape contractors that utilize sustainable methods and low-emission equipment.
- Evaluate and establish criteria for an Environmental Business Recognition Program acknowledging businesses who have implemented environmentally friendly processes into their operations and incorporate innovation and continuous improvement.
- Evaluate establishing sustainability incentives for local businesses and multifamily residential properties to implement sustainability improvements to their properties.
- Continue *Highland Park Composts!* Program and outreach to continue growing food business participation in composting. Continue promoting those businesses that implement or continue composting.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the City's plastic bag recycling ordinance and consider alternative methods of reducing plastic bag use.
- Encourage battery-powered landscaping equipment.\* Educate licensed landscapers about gas leaf blower restrictions, and implement gas leaf blower ban as of January 1, 2027.

*\*indicates action set forth in 2020-2022 plan that has not yet been fulfilled*



# ENERGY

Energy management is a crucial component of any sustainability plan. The ultimate energy goals of the City are to increase the efficiency of its buildings and vehicle fleet, and to reduce reliance on fossil fuels by increasing the use of renewable sources of energy. Multiple departments have a role to play in reducing Highland Park's energy consumption. Energy management extends beyond the borders of the City and is a regional matter. As such, the City will focus its efforts towards achieving its energy goals locally as well as regionally through intergovernmental councils of government, with sister governments, and through partnerships with neighboring communities.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- In 2020, the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 5% by 2025 was reached.
- A webinar was hosted by Highland Park and North Shore Gas in 2021 to discuss energy saving opportunities for restaurants.
- The City achieved SolSmart Silver designation in 2022.
- Highland Park residents participated in the Solar Homes Tour in 2022.
- Converted to LED streetlights and LED lighting for Fire Station #33, Police Department parking lot, Highland Park Library and Highland Park Senior Center (HPCC).



## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Consider 100% green power for future residential aggregation contract.
- Participate in efforts by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus to negotiate changes to the ComEd franchise agreement to enable the City to recoup costs of energy upgrades to City buildings.
- Promote energy efficiency programs offered by the utilities for the City, residents and businesses.
- Promote the Lake County Property Assessed Clean Energy ("PACE") financing program for energy efficiency projects on commercial facilities.
- Explore opportunities to install behind the meter solar panels at various City properties, including the water plant.
- Continue annual updates of the GHG emissions inventory and monitor progress toward the reduction goal.
- Consider stretch code adoption, when available.
- Review SolarApp to streamline solar permitting and review.
- Track solar installations in a format that complies with CDP reporting requirements.
- Work toward net zero for new City buildings; incorporate renewable energy and electric only into new construction, equipment replacements and renovation projects.
- Continue to maximize energy efficiency incentive programs offered by the utilities to the public sector, including custom programs.
- Continue lighting retrofits with LED fixtures.
- Monitor the Volkswagen Settlement Fund, managed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Inflation Reduction Act and other incentives for fleet funding opportunities.
- Review the Sustainable Fleet Policy and adjust as needed to embrace technological

advances. Consider vehicle disposal to address inefficient vehicles remaining in operation elsewhere.

- Continue adding hybrid and electric vehicles to the City fleet, including police patrol vehicles and for 2026 for the Fire Department.
- Consider requiring low- or zero-emission equipment in construction and maintenance contracts.
- Standardize vehicle data collection to measure impact of fleet efficiency upgrades.
- Identify opportunities for the installation of electric vehicle chargers in City parking lots and streets and continue installing conduit for future charging stations in City lots.
- Participate in the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus EV Ready program.

# LEADERSHIP

The City has been recognized as a municipal and regional leader in sustainability achievements over the years, but continual improvement is needed to maintain our leadership role. Recognitions and awards highlight the City's accomplishments and enhance the City's reputation for leadership in sustainability.

Highland Park also has a strong history of collaborating with neighboring communities, such as on the creation of the GIS Consortium and the North Shore Electricity Aggregation Consortium. Specific to sustainability, the City's leadership on the electric vehicle charging station purchasing agreement was a great success. New opportunities are available every year and can result in cost savings while also achieving policy objectives.

Leadership and recognition efforts will be led by the City Manager's Office.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- Secured a Greenest Region Corps member until the program was paused. The intern supported citywide sustainability programming.
- Set a GHG reductions goal and achieved initial goal earlier than expected.

## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Secure a GRC member to support citywide sustainability programming when program resumes operations.
- Add a full time sustainability staff member to the City.
- Research opportunities to apply for recognition programs such as Cities 100 and Walk Friendly Community. Staff will facilitate discussions with City commissions and the Green Alliance to determine whether or not to pursue applications and develop work plans accordingly.
- Explore opportunities for greater efficiency or impact by working in partnership with neighbors including, but not limited to, Deerfield, Highwood, Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Wilmette, and Glencoe, and collaboration opportunities offered at the county level.
- Consider establishing a Sustainability Speaker Series with the Sustainability Advisory Group, and partner with other sister governments for such public education events.
- Complete the Global Covenant of Mayors requirements by developing full climate action and adaptation plans by the end of 2023.



# MOBILITY

Highland Park is dedicated to providing safe and interconnected transportation network that encourages multimodal transportation including walking, cycling, mass transit, and zero-emission vehicles. The citywide bike and pedestrian network, privately-owned vehicles, and mass transit options enable mobility for all residents and visitors. Highland Park has a Bike/Walk Plan, MoveHP, which aims to make the city more accessible to those travelling on foot and by bike. Progress is monitored by the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG). TAG provides recommendations related to multi-modal, vehicular, and pedestrian and parking conditions including MoveHP and Complete Streets. Public Works is the lead department responsible for implementing its recommendations every year.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- Adopted the MoveHP plan in 2020. This is a 5-year update to the Bike-Walk HP 2030 plan.
- Partnered with Bike Walk HP and the Historic Preservation Commission to host community bike rides.

## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Support and collaborate with TAG on MoveHP implementation, and additional initiatives to increase the use of non motorized modes of transportation
- Complete the Clavey Road Side Path (Green Bay to Route 41 Ramp), as recommended by the Bike/Walk plan.
- Construct multiple bike/walk improvement projects as part of the 10-year capital improvement plan, including Sheridan Road Sidewalk (Roger Williams Av to Cedar/Dean).
- Collaborate with Pace Transit Services to provide better access by improving bus routes in Highland Park, and to add electric busses to routes through Highland Park.
- Advance from Bronze to Silver in the Bike Friendly Communities program.



# NATURAL AREAS

Highland Park is known for the proactive stewardship of its natural environment. The City has worked diligently to care for its trees, ravines, and other habitats through code protections and widespread public education efforts. Multiple departments and commissions have a role to play.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- Promoted permeable pavers and bioswales as public benefits in the design guidelines document.
- Expanded pollinator habitat along the McClory Trail.
- Planted trees citywide, expanding diversity of species.



## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Add municipal and private pollinator gardens to the City's searchable map and the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge's database.
- Identify information source to increase awareness regarding invasive species such as buckthorn and other topics for public education. The resource will provide information including maintenance and environmentally safe removal.
- Continue to develop new habitats to support plant pollinators through the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge in partnership with the Park District.
- Promote the benefits of native and pollinator plants and raise awareness of invasive species through educational materials and other communication vehicles.
- Work to replace invasive phragmites grass within the Briergate area with pollinator and native habitat.
- Develop and enhance educational materials and programs for property owners and landscapers in the areas of Highland Park's ravines, bluffs, and shorelines.



# WASTE MANAGEMENT

The challenges in the waste management field have increased since the last update of this plan. Online shopping has increased packaging waste and changes in the international market for recyclable materials has reduced opportunities for landfill diversion. Although Highland Park consistently achieves a citywide recycling rate near 30% (40% for residential) there is room to expand participation in recycling and composting services. The City Manager's office will lead the effort to reduce the City's volume of solid waste and to increase participation in recycling programs and composting.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- Renewed waste, recycling and composting commercial and residential hauling RFPs to continue encouraging the reduction of waste and maximize recycling and/or composting.

## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Launch All In Communitywide curbside compost program for residential properties.
- Encourage composting at City and sister governments' special events.
- Demonstrate progress toward making City-sponsored events zero-waste.
- Focus on opportunities to promote reuse through special events and in conjunction with SWALCO.
- Encourage use of compost by contractors, evaluate the use of compost for use in City projects, and work to provide information about compost to residents.
- Collaborate with LRS and SWALCO to increase the City's recycling and composting rate by weight (percent of total waste) and by participation (percent of total accounts recycling/composting) for residential and commercial customers.
- Investigate options for leaf pick-up for City facilities.

# WATER

Highland Park sits on the shore of Lake Michigan and operates a Water Treatment Plant that provides potable water to more than 60,000 customers within Highland Park and other area municipalities. Highland Park is dedicated to protecting its surface and groundwater sources with both the City Manager's Office and Public Works taking a leadership role.

## 2020 – 2022 Accomplishments

- Completed a code amendment to speed the review process for beach structure permits, required to protect the City's shoreline.
- Constructed parking lots and alleys with permeable paving.

## 2023 – 2027 Actions

- Expand enforcement of the City's phosphate ban and address the use of pesticides and salt. The City will comply with recommendations from the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission which is leading the effort to identify best practices on these issues.
- Investigate incentives as well as provide education to encourage residential rain gardens.
- Lead effort with Community Development, the City Manager's Office, and the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, to identify effective and appropriate measures to meet stormwater quality regulations.
- Collaborate with Lake County Stormwater Management Commission to develop and enhance educational materials and programs for property owners and landscapers in the areas of Highland Park's ravines, bluffs, and shorelines.
- Continue to use green infrastructure on City-owned property, including the Right of Way, into its storm sewer replacement projects, and to educate private landowners about the benefits of such projects on their own properties.
- Identify opportunities to encourage green infrastructure through the sewer permit requirements.
- Develop public education about reducing contaminants from stormwater runoff.
- Update the City's Source Water Protection Plan (Lake Michigan)
  - Illinois EPA requirement
- Reconstruction using permeable pavers at the following locations:
  - Second St. Parking Lot (north of 1853 Second St) – Michael's
  - Allee Lane
  - alley from Maple Lane to Vine Avenue
- Collaborate with Public Works to explore options to clarify the green stormwater management infrastructure and techniques allowed in the municipal code.



# SUMMARY

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2020-2022

### COMMUNICATION

In 2020 the City adopted bird-friendly construction standards that require the City and its general contractors, agents, representative and subcontractors to incorporate to the greatest extent practicable bird-safe building materials and design features into the design of newly-constructed buildings to be used primarily by the City.

Annual in-person and virtual activities were held to celebrate Arbor Day.

The City informed residents about recycling and composting through its communication channels.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2022, Lake County launched the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (“C-PACE”) financing program for clean energy and sustainability projects on commercial facilities.

### ENERGY

In 2020, the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 5% by 2025 was reached.

A webinar was hosted by Highland Park and North Shore Gas in 2021 to discuss energy saving opportunities for restaurants.

The City achieved SoSmart Silver designation in 2022.

Highland Park residents participated in the Solar Homes Tour in 2022.

Converted to LED streetlights and LED lighting for Fire Station #33, Police Department parking lot, Highland Park Library and Highland Park Senior Center (HPCC)

### LEADERSHIP

Secured a Greenest Region Corps member until the program was paused. The intern supported citywide sustainability programming.

Set a GHG reductions goal and achieved initial goal earlier than expected.

### MOBILITY

Adopted the MoveHP plan in 2020. This is a 5-year update to the Bike-Walk HP 2030 plan.

Partnered with Bike Walk HP and the Historic Preservation Commission to host community bike rides.

### NATURAL AREAS

Promoted permeable pavers and bioswales as public benefits in the design guidelines document.

Expanded pollinator habitat along the McClory Trail.

Planted trees citywide, expanding diversity of species.

### WASTE MANAGEMENT

Renewed waste, recycling and composting commercial and residential hauling RFPs to continue encouraging the reduction of waste and maximize recycling and/or composting.

### WATER

Completed a code amendment to speed the review process for beach structure permits, required to protect the City’s shoreline.

Constructed parking lots and alleys with permeable paving.



## ACTIONS FOR 2023-2027

### COMMUNICATION

Reconvene the Green Alliance, a collaborative group of representatives from local governments and institutions such as the county, library, park district, school districts, township, hospital, and the business community.
Promote sustainability with residents at festivals, lectures, workshops and other events, and expand food scrap composting participation at events hosted by Green Alliance organizations.
Add more citywide sustainability actions to the searchable online map and continue promotion of the map for use by residents, businesses, and property owners.
Compile year-end achievements on all tasks and measurable goals and draft annual citywide work plans in cooperation with the City's departments.
Promote participation in the Solar Home tour combined with a showcase of electric vehicles.
Develop targeted communication plan with a goal of reducing residential natural gas use.
Incorporate sustainability issues into City communications on a regular basis.
Continue to promote community solar, and opportunities for group purchasing discounts for solar and other renewable energy technologies.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Engage the Chamber in a discussion about its priorities and concerns of its member businesses. Specific to sustainability, the discussion will explore how the subject of sustainability can be used to promote local businesses and how the City can recognize and support businesses that practice and promote sustainability, as well as local goods & services.
Promote the environmental awards through its multiple communication platforms, including recognizing landscape contractors that utilize sustainable methods and low-emission equipment.
Evaluate and establish criteria for an Environmental Business Recognition Program acknowledging businesses who have implemented environmentally friendly processes into their operations and incorporate innovation and continuous improvement.
Evaluate establishing sustainability incentives for local businesses and multifamily residential properties to implement sustainability improvements to their properties.
Continue <i>Highland Park Composts!</i> Program and outreach to continue growing food business participation in composting. Continue promoting those businesses that implement or continue composting.
Evaluate the effectiveness of the City's plastic bag recycling ordinance and consider alternative methods of reducing plastic bag use.
Encourage battery-powered landscaping equipment. Educate licensed landscapers about gas leaf blower restrictions, and implement gas leaf blower ban as of January 1, 2027.



## ACTIONS FOR 2023-2027 (continued)

### ENERGY

Consider 100% green power for future residential aggregation contract.
Participate in efforts by the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus to negotiate changes to the ComEd franchise agreement to enable the City to recoup costs of energy upgrades to City buildings.
Promote energy efficiency programs offered by the utilities for the City, residents and businesses.
Promote the Lake County Property Assessed Clean Energy (“PACE”) financing program for energy efficiency projects on commercial facilities.
Explore opportunities to install behind the meter solar panels at various City properties, including the water plant.
Continue annual updates of the GHG emissions inventory and monitor progress toward the reduction goal.
Consider stretch code adoption, when available.
Review SolarApp to streamline solar permitting and review.
Track solar installations in a format that complies with CDP reporting requirements.
Work toward net zero for new City buildings; incorporate renewable energy and electric only into new construction, equipment replacements and renovation projects.
Continue to maximize energy efficiency incentive programs offered by the utilities to the public sector, including custom programs.
Continue lighting retrofits with LED fixtures.
Monitor the Volkswagen Settlement Fund, managed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Inflation Reduction Act and other incentives for fleet funding opportunities.
Review the Sustainable Fleet Policy and adjust as needed to embrace technological advances. Consider vehicle disposal to address inefficient vehicles remaining in operation elsewhere.
Continue adding hybrid and electric vehicles to the City fleet, including police patrol vehicles and for 2026 for the Fire Department.
Consider requiring low- or zero-emission equipment in construction and maintenance contracts.
Standardize vehicle data collection to measure impact of fleet efficiency upgrades.
Identify opportunities for the installation of electric vehicle chargers in City parking lots and streets, and continue installing conduit for future charging stations in City lots.
Participate in the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus EV Ready program.

## ACTIONS FOR 2023-2027 (continued)

### LEADERSHIP

Secure a GRC member to support citywide sustainability programming when program resumes operations.
Add a full time sustainability staff member to the City.
Research opportunities to apply for recognition programs such as Cities 100 and Walk Friendly Community. Staff will facilitate discussions with City commissions and the Green Alliance to determine whether or not to pursue applications and develop work plans accordingly.
Explore opportunities for greater efficiency or impact by working in partnership with neighbors including, but not limited to, Deerfield, Highwood, Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Wilmette, and Glencoe, and collaboration opportunities offered at the county level.
Consider establishing a Sustainability Speaker Series with the Sustainability Advisory Group, and partner with other sister governments for such public education events.
Complete the Global Covenant of Mayors requirements by developing full climate action and adaptation plans by the end of 2023.

### MOBILITY

Support and collaborate with TAG on MoveHP implementation, and additional initiatives to increase the use of non motorized modes of transportation.
Complete the Clavey Road Side Path (Green Bay to Route 41 Ramp), as recommended by the Bike/Walk plan.
Construct multiple bike/walk improvement projects as part of the 10-year capital improvement plan, including Sheridan Road Sidewalk (Roger Williams Av to Cedar/Dean).
Collaborate with Pace Transit Services to provide better access by improving bus routes in Highland Park, and to add electric busses to routes through Highland Park.
Advance from Bronze to Silver in the Bike Friendly Communities program.

### NATURAL AREAS

Add municipal and private pollinator gardens to the City’s searchable map and the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge’s database.
Identify information source to increase awareness regarding invasive species such as buckthorn and other topics for public education. The resource will provide information including maintenance and environmentally safe removal.
Continue to develop new habitats to support plant pollinators through the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge in partnership with the Park District.
Promote the benefits of native and pollinator plants and raise awareness of invasive species through educational materials and other communication vehicles.
Work to replace invasive phragmites grass within the Briergate area with pollinator and native habitat.
Develop and enhance educational materials and programs for property owners and landscapers in the areas of Highland Park’s ravines, bluffs, and shorelines.



## ACTIONS FOR 2023-2027 (continued)

### WASTE MANAGEMENT

Launch All-In Communitywide curbside compost program for residential properties.
Encourage composting at sister governments' special events.
Demonstrate progress toward making City-sponsored events zero-waste.
Focus on opportunities to promote reuse through special events and in conjunction with SWALCO.
Encourage use of compost by contractors, evaluate the use of compost for use in City projects, and work to provide information about compost to residents.
Collaborate with LRS and SWALCO to increase the City's recycling and composting rate by weight (percent of total waste) and by participation (percent of total accounts recycling/composting) for residential and commercial customers.
Investigate options for leaf pick-up for City facilities.

### WATER

Expand enforcement of the City's phosphate ban and address the use of pesticides and salt. The City will comply with recommendations from the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission which is leading the effort to identify best practices on these issues.
Investigate incentives as well as provide education to encourage residential rain gardens.
Lead effort with Community Development, the City Manager's Office, and the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, to identify effective and appropriate measures to meet stormwater quality regulations.
Collaborate with Lake County Stormwater Management Commission to develop and enhance educational materials and programs for property owners and landscapers in the areas of Highland Park's ravines, bluffs, and shorelines.
Continue to use green infrastructure on City-owned property, including the Right of Way, into its storm sewer replacement projects, and to educate private landowners about the benefits of such projects on their own properties.
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# CLOSING

The City of Highland Park is committed to environmental leadership and sustainability. With focused plans in the areas of Communication, Economic Development, Energy, Leadership, Mobility, Natural Areas, Waste Management and Water, the City aims to become net zero by 2035. This goal will only be met with a comprehensive, inclusive process. All stakeholders (City government, residents, and businesses) must be committed to the goal. Data and reporting will be necessary to track progress toward the goal. Collaboration and partnerships will be key drivers to success.

The City thanks the Sustainability Advisory Group (SAG) for leading the effort of developing this plan. Members of the SAG include:

Kelly Nichols, Chair  
Jay Futterman, Vice Chair  
Julie Campbell  
Megan Geelhoed  
Michelle Kramer  
Daniel M. LaCosse  
Tatiana H. Papakos  
William White, Student Representative  
Kim Stone, Council Liaison



# Ready to See Waste **Differently?**

## Introducing Recycle Coach



### What Goes Where

Search the database of 400 Materials and 15,000 synonyms to find the proper disposal instructions for your item.



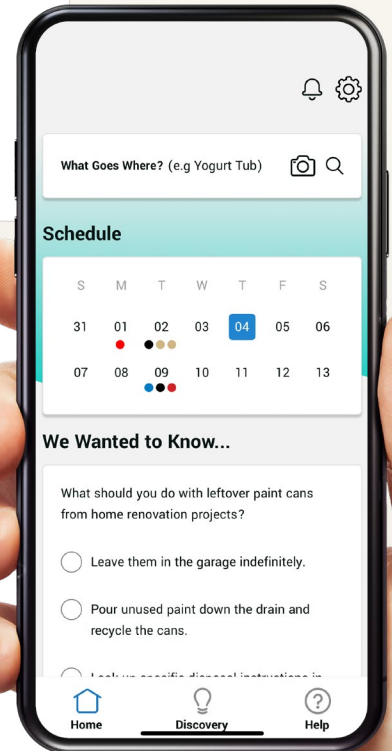
### Discovery Zone

Educational content including monthly 'We Wanted To Know' quiz questions, Misunderstood Materials, Kids' Activity Packets, and more.



### Calendar

See curbside Collections, Drop-off Locations, and Events at a glance, customize your reminders.



## Client Testimonials

### Municipal Staff

"I am just really excited about Recycle Coach and know this is something our residents will appreciate."

### Resident

"Recycle Coach helps us connect with our community and it's fun for our kids!"



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