

# Village of La Grange Park Sustainability Plan

March 2012



Produced by:  
The Village of La Grange Park  
**Cool Village Commission**



**VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE PARK SUSTAINABILTY PLAN**  
**Approved March 27, 2012**

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# VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE PARK SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

## I. Sustainability

Sustainability is a process of community stewardship that utilizes resources in the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. A successful program can be implemented through more efficient use of natural resources (land, energy, water and materials), resulting in a measurable reduction of pollutant and greenhouse gases, emissions and utilization costs.

## II. Introduction

The Village of La Grange Park has long responded to the desire of its residents to improve the local environment, thereby enhancing the ambiance of living and working within the Village and improving the health of its residents. Such activities have served to minimize Village government expenditures on energy, with a focus on long-term fiscal responsibility. The history of the Village of La Grange Park's sustainable actions is described in detail in Section V of this Sustainability Plan ("Plan").

In 2008, a group of La Grange Park residents formed the Cool Village Coalition to express their desire for the Village to take actions to address global climate change and otherwise improve the air, water, and other natural resources within the Village. The Village responded by creating a Subcommittee of the Village Board to study how the Village might respond to the request of the citizen group. The Subcommittee recommended the formation of an ad hoc advisory commission to create a sustainability plan and recommend additional actions for consideration of the Village Board. On October 27, 2009, the charter ("CVC Charter") authorizing the creation of the La Grange Park Cool Village Commission ("CVC") was adopted by the Village Board. One task in the CVC Charter was creation of this Plan.

Accordingly, numerous strategies are enumerated in Section X of this Plan that may be implemented by the Village government to improve and increase local sustainable practices. Over time, the need, ability, willingness, and goals of the Village and its residents will evolve. For example, the Village has adopted a model to track the annual greenhouse gases emitted by the community. Trend data from the model may suggest certain types of programs and actions that will maximize the reduction of emissions. Therefore, a process for adoption of sustainable practices and decision making is set forth in Section XI of this Plan. This will allow for the focus of energy and resources on the highest priority activities.

## III. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is encapsulated in the CVC Charter, clearly stating the Village Board's intent:

To educate and inform citizens and facilitate sustainable community practices that lead to a reduction of the community's carbon footprint while promoting water conservation and the improvement of air, climate and water quality.

The goal of this Plan is to establish a framework for future decision making by the Village government to make sustainable choices, thereby enhancing the quality of life of Village residents and making the Village of La Grange Park an even better place to live, work and play.

The practices of the Village government and its residents have a substantial impact on the local environment. For example, in regards to water quality, the use of permeable paving materials, the design of gutters, and the use of rain barrels by households may reduce or prevent flooding in houses and streets after heavy rains. A multitude of potential actions may also impact the health and well-being of Village (and metropolitan area) residents. In regards to air quality, reducing the quantity of small-particulate emissions that are released into the air while cars idle can potentially improve the quality of the air breathed by Village residents, and in turn improve the health of the elderly and individuals with heart or respiratory ailments. Other potential actions may reduce the carbon emissions generated within the Village, contributing to benefits on a much larger scale.

#### **IV. Essential Background**

In order to evaluate what works best for the Village of La Grange Park, it is essential to consider the history and characteristics of the community. The following background material provides basic context for determining appropriate actions.

##### ***Mission Statement***

The Village of La Grange Park adopted the following Mission Statement to provide a comprehensive vision for the operation of Village government:

The Village of La Grange Park is committed to providing its citizens effective and efficient government services in a fiscally responsible manner. The Village encourages cooperation among its staff, Board and other units of government in order to assess community needs and to determine the most effective manner in which to meet those needs. While committed to maintaining a professional and responsible atmosphere, the Village must weigh individual needs against community standards and resources and determine what is in the best interests of all its residents.

The scope of this Plan within the Village's Mission Statement is intended to address the operation of Village government and the voluntary participation of La Grange Park community, i.e., residents, business owners, land owners, and other community stakeholders.

##### ***Demographics***

The Village of La Grange Park, incorporated in 1892, is 17 miles west of downtown Chicago located in Cook County, Illinois, comprising of 1,408 acres. According to the 2010 Census, the Village has a population of 13,579. There are 5563 housing units, 3,593 (65%) being single owner family occupied. Approximately 28 acres are dedicated to commercial floor space and approximately 33 acres are used for industrial floor space. There are approximately 100 commercial establishments and 10 industrial establishments. There are six parks, comprised of 21.5 acres. There are five schools, 2 private and 3 public. There are 2 gas stations and 3 residential retirement communities.

## **Land Use**

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Single Family Residential	640	44.63
Two-family Residential	13	00.90
Multi-Family Residential	86	06.00
Total Residential	739	51.53
Commercial	28	01.95
Institutional (including cemetery)	61	04.25
Industrial	33	02.30
Vacant	1	00.07
Forest Preserve	238	16.60
Parks and Recreation	24	01.67
Road Right of Way	292	20.37
Rail Road Right of Way	18	01.26
Total Non-Residential	695	48.47
Entire Village	1,434	100.00%

## **Location**

The Village is located between the junction of I-290/I-88 and the junction of I-55/I-294. US Routes 45 (La Grange Road) and 34 (Ogden Avenue) provide direct access to both junctions and connect to the Village's two commercial nodes: the Village Market and 31<sup>st</sup> Street Business Corridor. Metra operates two commuter rail stations in nearby La Grange that are within walking distance to many residents of La Grange Park. Pace also operates four express bus routes that travel through or adjacent to the Village limits. O'Hare and Midway Airports are less than 30 minutes away. Rail freight travels through the Village along the IHBR alignment, which parallels La Grange Road.

## **Roads**

The Village maintains 38 miles of road. The roads are classified into three categories:

- 1) Arterial Roads: Arterials are intended to provide a high degree of mobility and function as the primary travel routes for vehicles entering, leaving, and passing through urban areas.
  - La Grange Road\*
  - 31<sup>st</sup> Street\*
  - Ogden Avenue\*
- 2) Collectors: The collector street system is designed to support the arterial network.
  - Maple Avenue\*
  - Brainard Avenue
  - Harding Avenue (east of Brainard Avenue)
  - Kemman Avenue
- 3) Local Streets: The role of the local street system is to carry low volumes of traffic at slow speeds to provide for safe and convenient access to housing areas and other land uses.

\*Denotes State roads under IDOT's purview.

## V. History of Sustainable Actions Taken by the Village

The Village of La Grange Park has a record of commitment to its environment, as evidenced by the following steps taken:

- The Village of La Grange Park has a long history of promoting and maintaining its urban forest and has been recognized as a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation for 23 consecutive years.
- Chapter 95 of the La Grange Park, IL Code of Ordinances is dedicated to trees and shrubs. Trees provide shade for cooling in summer, release moisture into the air, help reduce flooding and erosion, and are a source of beauty from season to season over a lifetime.
- The Village has implemented the following programs to continually maintain its urban forest:
  - Annual Tree Trimming Program: The Village's parkway tree population consists of approximately 6,000 trees of varying species and age, all of which require special attention from time to time. This process is thorough and takes into account the shape, size, location, and age of the entire tree.
  - Tree Planting Program: This program is primarily a replacement program for fatally diseased trees or trees severely damaged by storms or ice.
  - Annual Arbor Day Tree Planting Contest: Each year since 2004 the Village plants a tree in memory or in honor of a La Grange Park resident or group with the planting of a tree.
- Beginning in 1990, the Village began offering residents curbside recycling.
- In 2007, the Village signed onto the Greenest Region Compact for Metropolitan Chicago ("GRC"). The GRC, developed by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, obliges its members to take action to improve the region's air, water and land, reduce greenhouse gases, minimize waste, and reduce energy consumption.
- In 2007, the Village installed a pilot solar street light, the first solar-powered street light in the state of Illinois. A permanent solar street light was installed in 2011.
- In 2009, the Village sought funding for a new LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Public Works building. The proposed building would incorporate energy efficient technologies and practices conserving energy, while creating a healthier work environment.
- In October of 2009, the Village Board voted to establish the CVC. In January of 2010, the seven member CVC was formed and held its first meeting in February of 2010.
- In the winter of 2009, the Village purchased hybrid vehicles for the Police Department. The vehicles purchased replaced standard/conventional vehicles due for replacement.

- In February of 2010, the Village joined ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, an international association comprised of municipalities as well as national and regional local organizations worldwide who have made a commitment to sustainable development.
- In August of 2010, the Village received a grant for SEDAC (Illinois Smart Energy Design Assistance Center) to do an energy audit on the Public Works facility.
- In October of 2010, the Village instituted an annual Electronic Waste Recycling Day. Free CFL's were distributed to residents who participated in the inaugural E-Waste Recycling day.
- In April, 2011, the Village commenced participation as a collection site for the semiannual US Drug Enforcement Agency National Take Back Initiative for unwanted and unused pharmaceuticals.
- The Village continues to annually honor earth hour and earth day.

## **VI. Responsibilities of the Cool Village Commission, and its Successors**

The responsibilities of the CVC, and its Successors, are derived from the CVC Charter and in furtherance of the purpose and goals of the GRC. The following responsibilities are consistent with the purpose set forth in Section III of this Plan:

- Achieve the goals and objectives in this Plan.
- Evaluate and bring forth to the Village Board recommendations regarding membership to the U.S. Mayor Climate Protection Agreement and the Cool Cities Campaign.
- Provide technical assistance for conducting the Village's baseline carbon inventory.
- Provide technical assistance for monitoring the progress of this Plan and deliver corresponding reports to the Village Board.
- Review and recommend environmental goals and sustainability strategies.
- Develop educational information regarding this Plan and related activities.
- Assist the Village with the development and distribution of public service announcements.
- Provide public relations support to the Village for promoting this Plan and for any additional environmental sustainability initiatives adopted by the Village Board.
- Conduct public education and outreach programs under the direction of the Village Board.
- Recommend/Implement water strategies, including, but not limited to, promoting residential water conservation practices.

- Recommend/Implement waste strategies, including, but not limited to, enacting e-waste recycling programs.
- Participate in the Northern Illinois energy Project's Residential Lighting Program.
- Recommend/Implement air, energy and land strategies.
- Prepare periodic reports for the Village Board.

## **VII. Actions taken by the Cool Village Commission**

Since its inception, the CVC has taken the following actions:

- Held regular monthly meetings since February of 2010 in an effort to plan, prioritize and achieve the agenda set forth in the CVC Charter and the directives set by the Village Board.
- Facilitated the Village's membership to ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, an international organization comprised of over 1000 municipalities worldwide.
- Facilitated the Village's grant for any energy audit by SEDAC.
- Conducted an emissions inventory. The baseline carbon use audit is necessary to measure the Villages progress in reducing its carbon footprint.
- Proposed Community recommendations to the Board based upon the strategies identified by the GRC.
- Participated in community events, including E-waste recycling events, Drug Take Back days, and the La Grange Park Business Association Bike Fest.

## **VIII. Carbon Emissions Inventory**

Throughout 2010 and through the efforts of the Village's Cool Village's Commission, the Village conducted a carbon emissions inventory utilizing a data framework provided by ICLEI or Local Governments for Sustainability ([www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org)). The results of this inventory are detailed in two documents attached as appendices, one focusing on the Village as a governmental unit and one that is community wide that incorporates residential dwellings, businesses and organizations, schools and industry. Each of the reports includes baseline data and targets for reducing emissions.

Data from the ICLEI inventory process revealed which carbon emissions were reasonably within our control for target reductions and those of which there was little to no control. One such example where LGP may have little impact is the emissions that result from vehicle miles traveled. While the Village can encourage the use of public transportation and car-pooling to individual households, the majority of the vehicle miles traveled in La Grange Park is a product of circumstance, occurring on La Grange Road, a major thoroughfare for north-south traffic in the western suburbs located within the Village's boundaries, and other state roads.

## IX. Target Reduction of Green House Gas Emissions

The Carbon Emissions Inventory provides a basis to establish a GHG emission reduction target as compared to the baseline data. A target provides a goal which the community and local government can strive to achieve and a way to measure progress toward achieving the goal (as compared to the established baseline).

Today the human community is producing approximately twice as much CO<sub>2</sub> as the earth's natural carbon sinks (oceans, forest, etc.) can absorb. That means even if emissions are stabilized at current levels, greenhouse gas concentrations would continue to increase dramatically. The international scientific community recommends an 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050 to reach levels that will significantly slow global warming. In order to achieve this international goal, La Grange Park must reduce GHG emissions approximately 2% annually from 2009 GHG emission levels.

When developing our GHG emission reduction target, the CVC also wanted to develop a realistic target. Many municipal GHG emission reduction targets were reviewed. After considering the scientific and municipal target information, the CVC decided to set a stretch target of 2% GHG reduction annually. The accounting of GHG emissions will include community wide and government operations emissions, but not the emissions generated by pass-through transportation.

## X. Framework for the Village of La Grange Park Sustainable Strategies

There are a myriad of education activities, strategies and practices available to a municipality to achieve its identified goals to reduce its carbon footprint and improve air and water quality. The Village of La Grange Park will target the following strategies. Under each strategy are examples of possible activities and practices, but the Village government by no means shall be obligated to implement or be limited by the examples in pursuing the strategies. Specific activities will be determined according to the Strategic Decision Making Process outlined in Section XI of this Plan.

### ***Water Strategies***

- Promote water strategies involving best storm water management practices, such as permeable pavers, native landscaping, rain barrels, rain gardens, and drought tolerant grass seed.
- Encourage the enhancement of Watering Restrictions in the Village Code.
- Encourage sub-metering where feasible. (e.g., tenant spaces, commercial process specific sub-metering applications, etc.)
- Create Pamphlets and other educational pieces on Water Conservation and Clean Water Strategies. Both pamphlets and possible exhibits at Village and community functions would educate children and adults the importance of planting native landscaping, disconnecting downspouts from the underground drain tile surrounding their homes, and the proper

disposal methods for expired prescription medication. Education is key to increasing the implementation of effective water strategies in the community.

### ***Land Strategies***

- Investigate grant opportunities that promote sustainable land strategy practices.
- Keep apprised of sustainable land strategy practices available to the Village.
- Consideration of investigating the plausibility and cost effectiveness of installing a roof garden atop Village Hall.
- Promote the current Resident Purchase Parkway Tree Program.
- Periodically evaluate programs that encourage tree planting and improvement of the urban landscape.
- Periodically evaluate available preventive practices for the Emerald Ash Borer and other arboreal threats

### ***Air Strategies***

- Educate the community on the negative impact of car idling. Idling is wasteful, harmful to passengers, and car engines.
- Involve the community through school environmental clubs, local competitions to select signage, and post informational signage throughout the community.
- Review the feasibility of retrofitting existing municipal vehicles with pollution control devices.
- Encourage the public to take advantage of the benefits of non-automotive travel.

### ***Energy Strategies***

- Participate in the Energy Star Portfolio Manager Program. Portfolio Manager is an interactive energy management tool that allows participants to track and assess energy and water consumption of its buildings in a secure online environment. Portfolio Manager can help set investment priorities, identify under-performing buildings, verify efficiency improvements and justify EPA recognition, under the Energy Star Program, for superior environmental performance.
- Receive information from the EPA Region 5 Community Climate Change Network. This network provides information and opportunities about energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction to municipalities. (completed)
- Consider joining the U.S. EPA Green Power Partnership Program. This Program encourages the use of renewable energy.
- Share information with the Community on options for residents to purchase renewable energy through alternative electricity providers.

- Encourage applications for SEDAC (Illinois Smart Energy Design Assistance Center) Grants and other grants applicable to environmental sustainability.

### ***Energy Efficient Lighting Strategies***

- Engage in a number of activities to increase the utilization of energy efficient lighting. Hold participatory events, i.e., hold periodic lighting awareness & distribution events. For these events it is recommended to solicit local business for sponsorship, provide an educational component, and encourage incentives for local purchase.
- Distribute awareness aids. Publish and distribute lifecycle information at local vendor locations and local recycling centers. Provide lighting technical assistance resources and information on hazardous waste collection.
- Provide educational information on energy efficiency lighting. Supply information on proper application dimmer use. Identify cold weather locations. Provide information on the proper discarding of waste not acceptable for street side garbage disposal. Include information on collection sites; recycling and disposal; and breakage and proper cleanup.

### ***Waste Recycling and E-Waste Mitigation Strategies***

- Hold periodic E-waste Recycling Days. Develop strategies to coordinate and co-market the event with neighboring communities. Create community awareness and education regarding E-waste and recycling.
- Consider an ongoing metal recycling site and/or program within the Village. Develop an education program for the Village regarding metal recycling. Work with service provider to benchmark program. Establish a strategy to grow the program.

## **XI. Strategic Decision Making Process**

The CVC, or its Successor, will consider each proposed initiative and will research promising proposals and their likelihood of success if implemented. Initiatives showing merit will be prioritized according to community need, resource requirements and overall cost of implementation. A cost benefit analysis of the proposed initiative will also be performed. Initiatives low in priority or in need of refinement will be referred for follow up analysis or will be reconsidered in the future based on need.

Ideas for initiative proposals to include in this Plan may come from citizens within the community, initiatives employed by other municipalities, or those of State and Federal agencies. Initiative proposals that have a high probability of success and fit within the goals of this Plan will have a high likelihood of consideration. The success of this Plan relies on manageable initiatives that promise demonstrable outcomes for the citizenry and the environment.

Favorably evaluated proposals will be formally introduced to the Village Board for review, and will include detailed information regarding key objectives, costs of deployment, resources required, benefits to the community, potential liability issues, and relevant timelines for development and deployment. The Village Board will consider the proposed initiative in the context of benefits to the community. If the Village Board approves the initiative proposal, the

CVC, or its Successor, will create a formal action plan for deployment. The completed initiative including the action plan will then be included as an appendix to the existing Village Sustainability Plan.

## **XII. Sustainability Plan Review**

The Village Board shall evaluate the existing Village Sustainability Plan for necessary changes every two years, or as needed as determined by the Village Board.

## **XIII. Successor to the Cool Village Commission**

Three months prior to the completion of the CVC term, the Village Board shall take steps to extend the CVC or create a Successor to advance the purpose set forth in Section III of this Plan.

## **XV. ATTACHMENTS**