

The Environmental Sustainability Plan  
for Oak Park and River Forest

# PlanItGreen

2012 Community Sustainability Report Card



## What is the Community Sustainability Report Card?

The Oak Park River Forest Community Sustainability Report Card provides a snapshot in time of progress against sustainability goals that were created over a ten-month community engagement process in 2010-2011. Baseline metrics – dating back to 2007 – were created and are being used as a basis of comparison to 2012 data that has been aggregated around energy and water consumption, waste reduction, and transportation. The complete report also includes activity highlights, challenges and strategy snapshots during 2012. Over time, the sustainability report card will illuminate trends, highlight successes and shortcomings, and ultimately help support decisions on future policies, strategies, and resource allocation needed to achieve the 10-year plan's goals by 2020.

To access the full report card, visit [www.sevengenerationsahead.org](http://www.sevengenerationsahead.org)

## PlanItGreen Project Background

PlanItGreen is a sustainability planning and implementation project seeded by the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation's Communityworks Partnership. As one initiative of the Partnership, **PlanItGreen has engaged residents, businesses, and institutions in developing a two-community, ten-year sustainability plan for the Villages of Oak Park and River Forest, Illinois.**

The plan supports the interests of leaders and stakeholders in engaging all levels of community to reduce their environmental footprint and advance common sustainability objectives. The project is overseen by the Communityworks Advisory Board and the PlanItGreen Core Team. Phase 1 of PlanItGreen began in August, 2010 with

the aggregation of baseline metrics on community resource use conducted by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Phase 2, led by Seven Generations Ahead (SGA) in collaboration with the Delta Institute, included a multi-faceted community engagement process resulting in the development of a final plan with goals, targets, and strategies in each of nine sustainability topic areas – energy, waste, transportation, water, food, education, community development, open space and ecosystems, and green economy. This phase culminated on June 23, 2011 with the release of the final plan at an event with over 100 community leaders and residents. SGA is directing Phase 3 of the project, which includes 2012 and 2013 strategy implementation, data aggregation, and the project's first community sustainability report card.

OAK PARK-RIVER FOREST



Funded by the Chicago Community Trust, the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation, and the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation. Report written by Seven Generations Ahead. Special Thanks to CMAP and the PlanItGreen Core Team.

# PlanItGreen Trends and Metrics

## Quick Glance 2012

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

**Thumbs Up:** Exceeded Goals

**Thumbs Sideways:** Met Goals

**Thumbs Down:** Did Not Meet Goals

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Energy	Transportation	Education	Community Development	Water	Food	Waste	Green Economy	Open Space / Ecosystems
								
Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy use decreased, led by Oak Park's landmark increase in renewable energy procurement through its Community Choice Aggregation program. Both communities exceeded the plan's 3% energy reduction and GHG reduction goals compared to 2007 data.	The 3% goals of increasing public transit use and decreasing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) were not met. Bike Plan implementation in Oak Park and "complete streets" projects are yet to be realized significantly.	Strong and visible school and parent leadership in both communities, Green Community Connections events, zero waste event training, farm to school, and zero waste schools initiatives create the growing reality that if you live here sustainability will be hard to avoid.	New projects with LEED certification goals, geothermal systems, and other green features is encouraging. No formal sustainability criteria for publicly- or privately-funded projects exists. Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan and new projects should build momentum for 2013.	Water use decreased overall, though residential water use increased in both communities. Oak Park's Water Conservation Plan, slated for Board approval in early 2013, should provide conservation goal targets based on regional water supply, population increases, and other factors.	The Oak Park Farmers Market, the popularity of CSAs and new gardens have created a foundation upon which to build local, sustainable food sources. Projects need to be tracked in 2013, and more is needed to establish metrics and goals for major institutions/food markets for procurement of local, sustainable food.	Combined material (refuse, recycling, organics) diversion from landfill increased by 7.6%, putting both communities within reach of a 50% diversion rate by 2015. Total material generated decreased by 21.4% in Oak Park and 9.5% in River Forest.	Green business programs have started, but metrics are not yet in place for businesses to determine real progress.	Ecosystems enhancement is a part of new projects in development, but work needs to include and go beyond park districts. Many institutions lack clear policy on use of toxic materials. Comprehensive Green Infrastructure Plans are surfacing nationally, and could drive greater implementation.