



PlanItGreen

OAK PARK-RIVER FOREST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

PlanItGreen 2021 Work Plan

OVERVIEW

The following draft scope of work is based on the core findings presented by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) through web-based forums, conversations and surveys that were conducted as part of a listening campaign to assess PlanItGreen and surface thoughts about its next iteration. They also include input from the *Communityworks* Advisory Board, the PlanItGreen Leaders Forum, and the PlanItGreen Core Team. The key findings of the CNT report include:

- PlanItGreen is successful in providing educational opportunities to residents and as a network to encourage coordination and improve access to resources across local governments, religious organizations, and major educational institutions.
- Generally survey respondents and focus group participants believe PlanItGreen has influenced waste, food, greenery, green infrastructure, and clean energy issues the most. Although focus groups felt much more work was needed on clean energy.
- Renewable energy, waste reduction, water (clean water and flooding) were consistently identified as the highest priorities for environmental programming moving forward.
- There is a consensus that PlanItGreen will need to address racial equity in its work moving forward and that strategy and intention will be needed to increase engagement of people of color in the work of the program overall.
- There is also a consensus that the program should expand to include other communities, but focus group participants cautioned that this should begin with learning about and honoring work that is already being done, building trust with the leaders of that work, and asking them how PlanItGreen can support their goals if at all.
- A majority of focus groups and survey respondents felt that a new climate action plan is needed, but a majority of survey respondents felt that it should be adopted by Village governments or the County with all other local institutions supporting plan development.
- Overall, focus group analysis pointed for the need to reevaluate the role of PlanItGreen and focus activities more narrowly where the greatest impact can be achieved.

APPROACH AND STRATEGIES

The core proposed components for the 2021 implementation work plan include: a) engaging more people of color in PlanItGreen; b) engaging communities outside of Oak Park and River Forest that serve low-income and residents of color; c) clean energy; e) waste; f) supporting Oak Park climate action plan development; and g) youth. Equity will be a thread that runs through each of the core component areas.

Engaging People of Color in PlanItGreen

The respondents' focus on equity and diversity assert that equity and diversity should be a part of each work plan component, and that special attention should be given to broadening the diversity of people engaged in PlanItGreen and putting effort into strategies that achieve environmental and equity outcomes.

EQUITY COMPONENTS

This component by its nature of engaging more LMI/POC in PlanItGreen has equity integrated thoroughly.

1. Find and use **communication vehicles** to connect with the people we want to reach.
 - a) Connect with the Oak Park Black Residents Facebook page organizers. (Feb 2021)
 - b) Use schools as a communications mechanism. (Sept 2021)
 - c) Connect with DivCo at D97. (March 2021)
 - d) Work through landlords/owners of multi-unit buildings, including: Oak Park Residence Corporation (newsletter); Oak Park Apartments (newsletter to 600 households); Mike Fox; M&M Property Management; GLA; new downtown developments (April 2021)
 - e) Connect with Black residents of Oak Park Facebook group (Christina Waters); Carrie Summy; OPPL engagement facilitator; Mak Flournoy; etc. (Feb 2021)
2. Develop opportunities for learning, listening and **input on strategies** that engage low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents and people of color (POC).
 - a) Create educational and input forums that address equity and sustainability and provide program resources targeting LMI residents and POC. (April/May 2021 Forum)
 - b) Participate in communications vehicles that reach LMI residents and POC (Facebook; newsletters; meetings; etc.). (Feb 2021-Ongoing)
 - c) Explore deeper outreach through an LMI/POC engagement contractual.
3. Drive and support **equity-based project implementation** (to be addressed under each topic area)
4. Target and invite more LMI and POC on PlanItGreen **Core Team**. (Feb-March 2021)
5. Connect LMI residents and POC to **program resources** (Rain Ready; Elevate Energy; ComEd; Nicor; VOP; etc.) Discuss timeline with VOP and non-profit programs (April 2021 Forum)
6. Advocate for the use of Village of **Oak Park Sustainability Funds** to support LMI residents and POC. (Jan 2021-ongoing)

Engaging Neighboring Communities

Parameters for this opportunity to expand PlanItGreen to neighboring communities with low-income residents and residents of color may include:

- building a collaboration, and not a one-way relationship
- collective discussions around jointly developed goals and strategies
- sharing resources and bringing new resources to low-income communities
- sharing turnkey projects that have been successful from both communities

EQUITY COMPONENTS

This component by its nature of reaching out to LMI/POC communities has equity integrated thoroughly. To date, SGA has had two meetings with Broadview Mayor Katrina Thompson, who wishes to collaborate and would like PlanItGreen to support: a) development of a Broadview Sustainability Plan as part of a regular planning committee; b) the development of solar initiatives that provide reduced-rate electricity to Broadview residents. SGA has communicated and met several times with Sharif Walker, CEO of Bethel New Life in the Austin community of Chicago, who strongly wants to engage with PlanItGreen and specifically to support: a) Bethel's proposed urban farm and health and wellness programming; and b) development of solar arrays on Bethel's two core buildings and potentially other areas within their 10-acre property. SGA has discussed with RF Mayor Cathy Adduci and trustee Erika Bachner the arrangement of a meeting to determine Maywood's interest in engaging with PlanItGreen, which according to Erika from past discussions has centered on wanting to make Maywood greener literally through green infrastructure and garden projects.

1. Investigate opportunities by learning about current initiatives in neighboring communities and conducting a series of informational/**exploratory conversations with mayors and community leaders** from Broadview (Mayor Katrina Thompson), Maywood (Cathy Adduci's contacts), Bellwood (Mayor Harvey), Austin Bethel New Life CEO Sharif Walker, Cicero, Forest Park and Berwyn. (Jan-March 2021)
2. Develop a **plan** that outlines specific collaboration options with different individual communities across OP and RF boundaries, and that outlines the potential outcomes. (March 2021)
3. Advance **implementation** if interest and resources allow (solar project development; urban agriculture support; ghg emissions inventories; etc.). (March 2021-ongoing)
4. Aggregate and disseminate a list of **program resources** that could be immediately shared with neighboring communities. (March 2021)
5. Convene a **virtual meeting** 4 times per year with all of the communities and their leaders to share work projects, generate new ideas and strategize around resource acquisition. (April or May 2021 – first meeting)

Clean Energy

The clean energy elements of PlanItGreen will need to ensure that the implementation strategies align with the broad goal of achieving 7.6% annual emissions reductions between 2021 and 2030, and that achieve 45% total greenhouse gas emissions reductions from 2010 levels by 2030.

EQUITY COMPONENTS

The major equity components under Clean Energy include: a) connecting apartment building owners serving LMI/POC to resources related to energy efficiency and solar; b) making an application to the Illinois Solar for All program to provide reduced-rate electricity to Cook County LMI/POC residents; c) supporting taxing bodies and community institutions that serve LMI/POC residents with energy road map development toward 100% renewable energy; d) engage LMI/POC in development of the Village of Oak Park Climate Action Plan; and e) connect LMI/POC to immediate opportunities to buy solar energy from newly built solar arrays in Illinois.

1. Road Maps and Baseline GHG Inventories for Institutions: Work with each interested taxing body, major institution and sector group (Faith-based congregations; businesses; community organizations) in

agreeing to goal targets and developing an institutional **GHG inventory and mini-road map plan** to achieving ghg emissions reduction goal targets. Explore use of ICLEI GHG Inventory Tool (Jan-Feb 2021)

2. Engage buildings/facilities managers and boards to think through advanced strategies and **capital expenditures related to renewable technologies**, and develop long-term plans. (Feb 2021-ongoing)

3. Conduct **webinars and forums** on community clean energy models locally and across the country, including refrigeration, green hydrogen, and electrification strategies, and provide **direct technical assistance** to buildings and facilities managers. (July/Sept/Nov – 2021)

4. Explore best opportunities for **solar energy procurement** from new solar projects in Illinois. (Feb 2021-ongoing)

5. Solar for All: Work with neighboring communities to explore development of an **Illinois Solar for All** application that builds an off-site solar array for reduced-rate electricity for LMI residents and POC. (March-June 2021)

6. Develop a **Community Solar RFP** for institutions and sector groups in Oak Park and River Forest that would enable them to buy solar energy through a Power Purchase Agreement. (Sept 2021)

7. Support and encourage and communicate the **expansion of the Village of Oak Park municipal community solar program**. (ongoing)

8. **Connect residents to procuring electricity from new solar projects** being built in connection with the Future Energy Jobs Act and Clean Energy Jobs Act. (ongoing-Trajectory workshops and others)

9. Support community engagement linked to the **Village of Oak Park's Climate Action Plan**, including a concerted effort to engage LMI residents and people of color. (July-Dec 2021)

10. Meet with **community institution board members** quarterly or individually to inform them of institutional strategies and to develop buy-in. (April/Aug/Dec – 2021)

11. Meet periodically with **buildings and facilities managers** from taxing bodies, major institutions, private sector and faith-based sector to develop road maps and plans toward ghg emissions reductions and 100% renewable energy. (March/June/Oct – 2021)

Waste

EQUITY COMPONENTS

The equity components under Waste include: a) advocating for an “opt-out” residential curbside food scrap hauling contract that builds the service into the overall village portfolio of waste services and provides the service without costing LMI/POC extra money to engage the services; b) communicating recycling updates to apartment building owners and residents in multi-family apartment units so they know what can and cannot be recycled.

1. Conduct research, present models and advocate for “**opt-out**” **composting** programs in Oak Park and River Forest as part of universal waste service. (Feb 2021-ongoing)

2. Minimally support existing **schools** in increasing recycling and moving toward zero waste on an as-needed basis. (ongoing)

Youth

EQUITY COMPONENTS

The equity components related to It’s Our Future include: a) increasing participation of Youth of Color (YOC) in the program; b) connecting youth with YOC from other communities working on sustainability projects and the climate crisis; c) building in POC speakers and presenters; d) connecting YOC to community advocacy around sustainability and the climate crisis and to provide input into the VOP Climate Action Plan; and e) connecting YOC to opportunities related to the UN Climate Summit.

A. Learning Opportunities

- **Speakers** (Laura Derks for Climate Action Group; Suzy Schlossberg; Slater Jewell-Kemker, Director-“Youth Unstoppable”; Sunrise activist: advocacy/community organizer training, prior to Community Action candidate forums; Dolores Huerta?; Elevate Energy?; Conservation International – Amazon Rainforest (monthly)
- (Virtual) **Field Trips** (Eco House Chicago/South Side Blooms; Knowledge Sharing w other youth groups - BUILD's Iris Farm, Composting facility, etc. (April/July-Aug 2021)

B. Community Action

- Develop 3 minute public comments/presentations (videos?) with specific recommendations around the climate/sustainability + equity issues > make regular **presentations to community boards** (Sept-Dec 2021)
- Youth-led **environmental election forums** (create a list of recommendations/requests - reason/tool to apply continued pressure) (Feb-March 2021)
- **Climate Action Plan** (provide input on strategies, goals, etc.) (July-Dec 2021)
- Continue advocacy for **“opt-out” composting** programs In Oak Park and River Forest (ongoing)
- Submit articles to Wednesday Journal for Youth Sustainability Series (June-Dec 2021)

C. Connecting to Other Youth

- IOF/Youth Action Council **film screenings** with One Earth Film Festival (March w OEFF2021; April w OEFF Earth Week Mini Fest; Summer; Pre-COP 26: October)

D. COP 26 and International Learning

- Planning for **COP 26** in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021/applying for Observer Organization status and sending youth (April-Oct 2021)
- Studying the key elements of the **international climate agreement** (April-Nov 2021)
- Developing adult and youth **learning forums** related to COP 26 (Oct 2021)

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

	What are your objectives/indicators of success?	What are your projected measurable targets/goals?	How will you evaluate your program/collect data?
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Outcome 1	Attendance at film screenings-IOF/OEFF	150	Zoom counts
Outcome 2	Volume of renewable energy procured and CO2 reduction equivalency	Approximately 30,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions reductions related to renewable energy procurement	Calculate renewable energy volume procured and generated and convert to CO2 emissions reductions
Outcome 3	Number of projects supported outside of OP and RF in neighboring communities of color	5	Direct reports from communities