

PlanItGreen

The Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest

UPDATE / DECEMBER 2011

PlanItGreen Work Plan Implementation Begins

PlanItGreen implementation is well underway thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation's Communityworks initiative, which successfully met a \$2 million matching grant challenge by the Grand Victoria Foundation. The funds will provide half of the funding for the implementation of the 2011-2012 PlanItGreen Implementation Work Plan, which incorporates strategies from each of the sustainability plan's nine topic areas and will strive to implement 10% of the overall strategies in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest. The work plan will also include new baseline data aggregation, institutional goal pledges, cross-institutional strategy implementation, the enrollment of new community institutions, grant proposal development to support the acquisition of federal, state, and private dollars for specific projects, and an eventual community sustainability report card at the end of 2012 to measure progress against goals. To access the work plan, [click here](#).

PlanItGreen Stakeholders Share Progress at Forum

Fifty representatives from mostly all of the major Oak Park and River Forest institutions – including schools, parks, libraries, municipalities, townships, hospitals, universities, faith-based congregations, and business associations - packed the Marion Street Cheese Market on Nov 30 to review the 2011-2012 PlanItGreen work plan, discuss institutional goal pledge commitments and baseline data aggregation, and explore opportunities to collaborate on PlanItGreen implementation projects. The group of 50 shared current implementation successes and discussed ways that they could work together to impact PlanItGreen sustainability area goals. Some of the collaboration ideas raised included project teams of facilities and operations managers to explore waste reduction and other initiatives; a curbside food scrap collection advisory team; a school-based team to focus on sustainability education and facilities projects; a business retrofit planning team; and development of a congregation forum to promote goal and pledge commitments. For more information on linking your organization to PlanItGreen, send an inquiry to act@sevengenerationsahead.org.

Strategy Area One: EDUCATION

Education is listed as the top priority among the plan's nine topic areas. Educating residents about specific strategies they can implement at home is a key strategy within the plan. To that end, a new project called Green Community Connections recently organized a Green Connections Bike Tour and is developing plans to create additional resources for residents that will support strategy implementation at home. To learn more, visit greencommunityconnections.org.

Projects on the Move

Oak Park First in Illinois to Go All Renewable Energy

Oak Park has become the first municipality in Illinois and possibly the nation to choose an all-green power program for its residents and small business operators who participate in a new Community Choice Aggregation program. Oak Park's Village Board recently approved a two-year contract with Chicago-based Integrys Energy Services to supply electricity and energy credits from 100-percent wind sources, while still saving local customers about 25 percent over the current state-approved electricity rate. The cumulative savings for Oak Park consumers over the next two years is expected to be about \$4.5 million.

Euclid Avenue UMC Goes Geothermal

On November 13th Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church dedicated its newly installed geothermal heating and air conditioning system and permeable parking lot, where permeable pavers are installed over the geothermal well field. Along with the geothermal system, the permeable pavers will allow storm water to go into the ground instead of the combined storm and sanitary sewers. According to Euclid's Pastor Marti Scott, "What better gift can we give our children than to protect planet earth. We must become fossil free and significantly reduce our carbon footprint."

River Forest To Promote Green Block Parties in 2012

Beginning next spring, with the start of block party season, River Forest residents will have the option of checking "yes" to host a Green Block Party when filling out their party permit application. Green block parties will receive party kits which include a free Earth Machine compost bin along with instructions on how to use the bin and suggestions for green block party activities. The compost bin is a gift to the block --residents can decide who keeps it and how it will be used. The program is sponsored by the RF Park District Foundation as part of a PlanItGreen initiative and funded by a grant from Communityworks.

WHAT'S NEXT

Sustainable Teachers Task Force

The Sustainable Teachers Task Force is an emerging group of Oak Park and River Forest teachers that will convene in January to discuss strategies for incorporating sustainability-related curricula into the classroom and extra-curricular programs as well as to explore trainings and curriculum resource sharing forums for teachers. The task force will also investigate ways to access resources for projects related to sustainability education including solar panels, wind turbines, compost systems, school gardens, and more. For more information, contact act@sevengenerationsahead.org.

SIGN UP AND BECOME A
SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION

PlanItGreen

Through PlanItGreen, Oak Park and River Forest have a sustainability plan. Developed with community input, the plan features multiple strategies within nine sustainability topic areas. This newsletter will keep you updated on PlanItGreen progress as well as sustainability-related news from around Oak Park and River Forest.