



PlanItGreen Implementation Update

1st Quarter Report: November 1, 2011 – January 31, 2012

Education

Sustainable Teachers Network

PlanItGreen met with OP D97 teacher leaders, PTO parent leaders, and private school administrators to pitch the concept of a Sustainable Teachers Network and solicit candidates for members to be a part of this inaugural group. The network will develop and implement strategies for providing resources and training to teachers around sustainability curricula, program activities, and operational projects on-site that can be learning tools for students. First meeting is scheduled for February.

Green Community Connections

PlanItGreen met with the GCC leadership team twice to brainstorm development of a scope of work, budget, and funding proposal that would position GCC to be an on-line (website and newsletter) provider of resources for residents and congregations that wish to implement sustainability best practices at home. The resources would include “how to’s” on a variety of strategies, and would support PlanItGreen’s goals of educating and equipping residents to transform their own homes and community. GCC has created a funding proposal, which it is submitting in January to the OPRF Community Foundation.

GreenTown Oak Park

Through a collaboration of partners, GreenTown Oak Park was implemented in October 2011. Workshops and keynotes focused on specific strategies in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest, including residential curbside food scrap collection programs, complete streets, energy efficiency financing, farm to school case studies, water conservation policy and practice, bike and pedestrian planning, safe routes to schools, geothermal for institutions, electric vehicle towns, etc.

Best Practice Case Studies

PlanItGreen developed priorities for best practice case studies and began engaging interns in research case studies on institutional food scrap collection projects. PlanItGreen met with Dominican University and Northern Illinois University to explore long-term intern candidates. One intern has been interviewed and an agreement has been solidified through Dominican and candidates are being interviewed through NIU.

PlanItGreen Adopter and Institutional Stakeholder Forum

A forum was held in November 2011 at the Marion Street Cheese Market, which attracted over 50 institutional leaders from mostly all of the taxing bodies and major institutions in OP and RF. Sustainability strategy implementation success vignettes were shared, the PlanItGreen implementation

work plan was shared and discussed, a process for pledge commitments was discussed, ideas were generated for collaborations among and across institutions and communities, and networking occurred. The forum has led to subsequent meetings and collaboration discussions across institutions, including meetings of private schools, collaborations with operations and facilities managers of major institutions, geothermal project sharing, and more.

Energy

Accessing and Promoting Existing Energy Efficiency Financing Programs

PlanItGreen met with Green Choice Bank and VOP to explore promotion of Energy Impact Illinois – a one-stop upfront financing program for energy efficiency upgrades that allows homeowners to pay back loans as savings are realized - within OP and RF.

Waste

Pilot Residential Curbside Food Scrap Collection Program

PlanItGreen met with VOP Public Works to develop plans for supporting the pilot program. Support in progress includes: organizing public education and input forums in South Oak Park with SEOPCO, Ascension, and Lincoln Elementary prior to the implementation of the pilot; providing sample marketing and educational materials from existing programs; and providing ongoing advisory support as needed. Forums are scheduled for February, and the pilot serving 1,500 households will begin in April 2012.

Institutional Food Scrap Diversion

PlanItGreen met in January with Dominican, Concordia, West Suburban Medical Center, and local haulers to gauge interest in a food scrap diversion project and create an action plan for moving forward. PlanItGreen met individually with Whole Foods, Fenwick, OPRF High School, and Rush Oak Park Hospital to explore interest and develop steps for implementation. PlanItGreen also met with a local hauler and an area compost site operator to assess capacity, interest, and costs for collecting, hauling, and depositing materials. The short-term plan includes conducting food scrap audits at institutions, assessing current contracts, meeting with additional haulers and compost site operators, assessing equipment needs and costs, devising an efficient collection route, and exploring grant funding opportunities. Individual meetings are in process with additional institutions, haulers, and compost site operators.

Establish Building Materials Re-Use Center

A building materials reuse center would enable building materials from Oak Park and River Forest to be stored and resold and diverted from landfill. Delta has explored various building sites and is in the process of obtaining cost estimates for improvements needed to a building it has identified in Maywood as its first choice location for the Center. Discussions have also begun with the Village of Maywood about the project and the zoning needed to implement it.

Expand Implementation of Zero Waste Schools Program

PlanItGreen met with the District 97 Zero Waste Schools Cohort to plan 2012 implementation, share successful strategies, and prepare for waste diversion assessments. PlanItGreen met with private schools and OPRF High School to explore their participation in the project, and is in process of exploring interest with D97 middle schools.

Water Conservation

Develop Water Conservation Task Force and Build Upon and Implement Water Conservation Strategies

The Village of Oak Park in collaboration with CMAP and with support from the PlanItGreen team is hosting a meeting on January 31 to engage community residents and institutions in water conservation planning and implementation. PlanItGreen is enrolling participants and will offer strategies to the overall plan that the community has offered up through the PlanItGreen process. Participants will join working groups that will implement specific strategies on 2012.

Park District of Oak Park Ridgeland Commons

PlanItGreen met with the Park District executive team and lead architects and designers of the Ridgeland Commons renovation team to promote water conservation strategies and other sustainable project features. PlanItGreen is supporting the development of a sustainability education component of the renovation that will provide on-site and web-based signage and learning about key water/sustainable features of the Ridgeland Commons development. These educational components will make Ridgeland Commons an educator of future and current generations.

Green Economic Development

Develop Green Business Criteria and Certification Program

PlanItGreen has had preliminary conversations with OPDC and VOP to discuss convening a multi-business/association team to develop green business criteria and a certification program. Decisions on how to move forward with respect to engaging the various business associations (VOP BAC, OPDC, OPRF Chamber, individual districts and businesses) will be made and an initial meeting will be convened in February.

Community Development

Review Municipal Ordinances and Codes through Sustainability Screen

PlanItGreen held one meeting with VOP staff to discuss a project that would hire consultants to do a sustainability screen of VOP (and potentially VRF) ordinances that either support or detract from sustainability, and make recommendations for policy revisions, additions, or deletions. PlanItGreen is scoping out a work plan and costs from urban planning firms.

Open Space & Ecosystems

Analyze Brownfield Sites and Develop Plans for Remediation and Reuse

PlanItGreen met with a US EPA Brownfield expert and VOP to explore development of a US EPA Brownfields Assessment grant proposal. PlanItGreen subsequently met with VOP to develop project parameters and core components, and hired a grant writing consultant to support VOP's proposal submission for \$400,000 to the EPA Brownfields Grant Program to support assessments, community education and input on site reuse strategies and strategies for developing green business corridors.

Food

Support Dominican Plan for Measuring and Increasing Local, Sustainable Food Access

PlanItGreen met with Dominican to discuss its interests in assessing current local food procurement with vendor Chartwells Thompson Hospitality. Dominican is discussing with Chartwells the creation of a Local Food Farmers Market, increased promotion of local food/farmers in the cafeteria, and other menu promotions.

Transportation

Create a Walking Tour and Strategy Session with Mark Fenton and OP and RF Policy Makers to Promote Bike/Ped Friendly Developments and Policy

PlanItGreen conducted a walking tour/strategy session in Oct 2011 as part of GreenTown that engaged over 50 village board and community leaders to analyze current street scaping and discuss development project features that would promote increased biking and walking in the community. In Jan 2012, the Village of Oak Park Board of trustees passed a "Complete Streets" policy requiring all new street developments to be "complete" streets that accommodate all modes of transit including biking and walking.

Increase Biking and Walking to School

PlanItGreen met with a PHC team committee to develop a strategy for engaging school principals in assessing the current barriers to and solutions for increasing the numbers of children that bike and walk to school. Next steps discussed included convening Village policy makers/staff and school administrators to design and implement solutions that make biking and walking to school completely safe for all children.

Deliver Bike Safety Education to 3rd-5th graders

Greenline Wheels as part of its mission and role in Pioneering Healthy Communities will implement bike safety training for grades 3 through 5 in Oak Park this spring, and is exploring a similar program for RF schools.

Create Plans for a Full Service Biking Facility in Downtown Oak Park

PlanItGreen met with Village President David Pope to explore ideas for innovative project ideas to include in VOP's TIGER grant proposal submission, and recommended the inclusion of a downtown bike facility among other strategies. VOP is exploring other options and venues for a new facility that would facilitate greater bicycle use to and from public transit and throughout the downtown business district areas.

Data Aggregation

Gather Baseline Data on Public Transit Use

No action taken.

Aggregate Data on Multi Family Recycling

PlanItGreen met with VOP Recycling Coordinator Karen Rozmus to develop a strategy for aggregating multi-family recycling rates.

Gather Core Baseline Metrics and Pledges for Large Community Institutions

PlanItGreen proposed a strategy and process for data aggregation/goal pledges at the November Institution Forum and has developed a pilot data/pledge form to be implemented through the Interfaith Green Network. The form and process is being discussed through the PlanItGreen Core team for further review and revision.

Engagement of Members

Support Sector Groups, Institutions, and Associations with Strategy Implementation and Member Engagement

Met with VOP staff to discuss grant proposal support related to TIGER and EPA Brownfields Assessment grants; met with Interfaith Green Network to plan the data aggregation/pledge component of IGN's February meeting; convened group meeting and met with individual operations and facilities managers from Whole Foods, Oak Park Rush, Fenwick, and OPRF High School to discuss involvement in food scrap collection/composting project.

Coordinate Cross-Institution and Cross-Strategy Implementation

Meeting with large community institutions about food scrap collection and composting already referenced.

Recruit New PlanItGreen Organizations and Participants

Met with Fenwick and Alcuin Montessori to discuss strategy implementation and ways to engage OP and RF private schools – a decision was made to conduct a zero waste schools forum for private schools that could lead into the development of a zero waste private schools cohort; met with Zero Waste D97 PTO Cohort to identify sustainable teachers candidates; met with Triton College to explore their interest in food scrap collection/composting; met with Robin Dunn to discuss community garden and café plan for Cheney Mansion and other park district open spaces.

Engage Core Team in PlanItGreen Implementation

Secured new Core team members for 2012 and convened Core Team meetings in November, December, and January to engage Core Team in guiding PlanItGreen process and in taking responsibility for the implementation of specific projects.

Communication

Keep Community Informed About PlanItGreen Progress and Events

Implemented December PlanItGreen e-newsletter and conducted community-wide institution forum that showcased ten success stories/implementation projects by PlanItGreen participant institutions.

Fundraising

Develop and Submit Grant Proposals to Complement CW Funding

Wrote \$55,000 (over two years) proposal to Chicago Community Trust to support SGA/Delta PlanItGreen work and to fund materials costs for specific implementation projects. Received commitment from GHWS Foundation to support 2011-2012 PlanItGreen work for \$5,000.