AURORA ILLINOIS

CITY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

Sustainability Plan 2019

Enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations of Aurora.

THERE'S *Something* HAPPENING HERE

The Vision

Aurora, founded in 1857, is a tolerant, inclusive, culturally diverse city that continually renews itself to meet the needs of changing times. Focused on resilient communities and peaceful growth, Aurora promotes the use of renewable, local resources to adapt to changing environmental, social and economic conditions. Aurora offers nurturing community support for all stages of life - family, education, career, employment, business, arts and entertainment through retirement. People of all ages and backgrounds flourish in a city that is second to none in its commitment to promoting a sustainable, prosperous quality of life for all its citizens.

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Introduction & Background Process

In 2009, the City of Aurora published its first Sustainability Plan, which was designed to be a long-range plan for enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations of Aurorans through sustainable practices. Many of the recommendations of that original plan were implemented, particularly those that the City government could implement and use to lead by example.

Aurora has been recognized as an environmental leader for quite some time, and the goal with this updated plan is to offer strategies that lead to tactics that can be monitored on a regular basis, inspiring even further action than has already begun. The updated plan is a citizen-initiated, forward-thinking document which has been designed to build an even more enduring plan, which sets innovate goals, metrics, and action plans to help Aurora achieve its sustainable community vision. The Sustainable Aurora advisory board conducted meticulous research of best practices, identified areas of the plan that needed to be updated, and determined that public input was needed. The board then conducted Interviews announcing the intent to update the existing Sustainability Plan and inviting citizens to participate in the plan's creation.

A draft of the plan was then presented to the public for input at public meeting(s) by social media and newspaper and a public hearing took place at the Aurora Planning Commission meeting. Feedback were further considered by the advisory board and City staff for additional comments and recommendations before being approved by the City Council.

Defintion of Sustainability

What is sustainability? Sustainability is the ability to meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

The intent of the City of Aurora Sustainability Plan is to improve the quality of life for present and future Aurorans by considering the long-term significance of our everyday decisions.

With a population of over 200,000 residents, Aurora is the second largest city in Illinois. The health, safety and general welfare of Aurora's inhabitants and habitats are essential to maintaining our high quality of life.

To take a comprehensive approach to sustainability, this plan identifies goals in the following nine areas:

- Climate Change
- Community Development and Land Use
- Education and Engagement
- Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Management
- Environmental Justice
- Resilient Community
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Waste Minimization, Reuse and Recycling
- Water Quality and Conservation

Guiding Principles

After looking extensively at best practices from sustainable cities around the region, the country and the world, the Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board and the City of Aurora agreed that "The Framework" created by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus provided a sound basis for expanding the City of Aurora long-term plan to link with regional efforts. The Greenest Region Compact 2 (GRC2) Framework offered concise strategies, as well as expanded the concepts of what could be done in Aurora.

The strategies and associated actions outlined in this plan are not meant to be prescriptive, but rather an attempt to lay out a series of priorities, goals, actions, directions, and practices from which Aurora can benefit. This document is meant to be specific enough to drive innovation in Aurora, and broad enough to allow for technological breakthroughs and new practices as they become available.

Based on all of our research, the City has created 2030 goals in the areas of:

- 50% renewable energy
- Implementing zero waste pilot initiatives
- Exploring potential to expand solar and other forms of renewable energy so that Aurora is true to our motto – City of Lights

The Aurora Sustainability Plan is meant to engage the community in a way that inspires local actions that can strengthen the community against the shocks of rapidly shifting global systems.

The sustainability plan update presents a vision for the sustainability future of the social, economic, and environmental assets of the City of Aurora. The plan serves as a guide for elected officials, municipal staff, community residents, business owners, recreational users, and environmental advocates, providing them with a long-term framework for making informed decisions and achieve measurable goals that will affect present and future generations to come.

Metrics & Evaluation

One of the challenges that every city faces is how to track progress on city initiatives, especially with an area as complex and comprehensive as sustainability can be. Much progress has been made in Aurora, and much remains to be accomplished.

To ensure that this plan is implemented effectively, the City of Aurora will:

- Track, analyze and manage data to advance sustainability goals
- Establish performance metrics
- Collect, organize, report and share data
- Continue to track and monitor data over time
- Publish a live dashboard on the City's website tracking sustainability achievements
- The City of Aurora will work with strategic partners to produce metrics, measure what has been accomplished and publish a score card

Focus Areas

The City of Aurora Sustainability Plan is organized into nine focus areas, with a vision statement and goal within each area. These focus areas will guide our future efforts, yet allow for flexibility. The timeline for implementation of Aurora's initiatives will vary. Ideas will be prioritized based on ease of implementation, availability of existing resources, funding commitments, and impact or urgency.

FOCUS AREA 01

Climate Change

The City of Aurora continues to expand awareness about the implications of climate change to our prosperity, environment and social systems.

FOCUS AREA 02

Community Development & Land Use

The City of Aurora continues to develop our community's environmental, social and economic resources using best practices for our region.

FOCUS AREA 03

Education & Engagement

The City of Aurora actively engages its diverse group of citizens on the benefits of sustainable development and practices.

FOCUS AREA 04

Energy Efficiency, Conservation & Management

The City of Aurora continues to expand our green energy options and promote energy efficiency, with a goal to become a 50% renewable energy city by 2025.

FOCUS AREA 05

Environmental Justice

The City of Aurora will ensure that all neighborhoods and regions in the city will have access to sustainable development opportunities.

FOCUS AREA 06

Resilient Community

The City of Aurora is a prosperous, healthy and safe city for all of its citizens now, and 100 years from now by wisely planning for the well-being of our citizens.

FOCUS AREA 07

Transportation & Infrastructure

The City of Aurora continues to develop and expand upon its green infrastructure.

FOCUS AREA 08

Waste Minimization, Reuse & Recycling

The City of Aurora will develop pilot programs to move towards a zero waste, circular economy city.

FOCUS AREA 09

Water Quality & Conservation

The City of Aurora will continue to protect and maintain its precious water resources for environmental, social and economic benefit to its residents and connected communities along the Fox River.

Focus Areas

There are many ways in which the achievement of sustainable goals can have a positive impact on local and regional economies. These goals will not only conserve resources and reduce Aurora's carbon footprint, but also enhance economic vitality and lead to a more resilient city.

The City of Aurora Sustainability Plan is intended to be a dynamic document; experience, testing, emerging and evolving technologies will be incorporated as we achieve goals and set new initiatives. All of the following nine focus area have a significant long-term impact on the sustainability of our community. The goals within each focus area are intended to guide future actions.

FOCUS AREA 01

Climate Change

Vision: The City of Aurora continues to expand awareness about the implications of climate change to our prosperity, environment and social systems.

Climate change is inevitable over the next few decades, but the degree to which the future climate will change will be determined by the choices and decisions we make today. Continued heavy reliance on carbon-intensive energy sources, will lead to greater warming and consequences for human health, ecosystems, and the economy. In this focus area, our goal is to increase public awareness on what we can do as individuals and collectively to ensure that we respond effectively to climate change challenges.

Goals for Climate Change

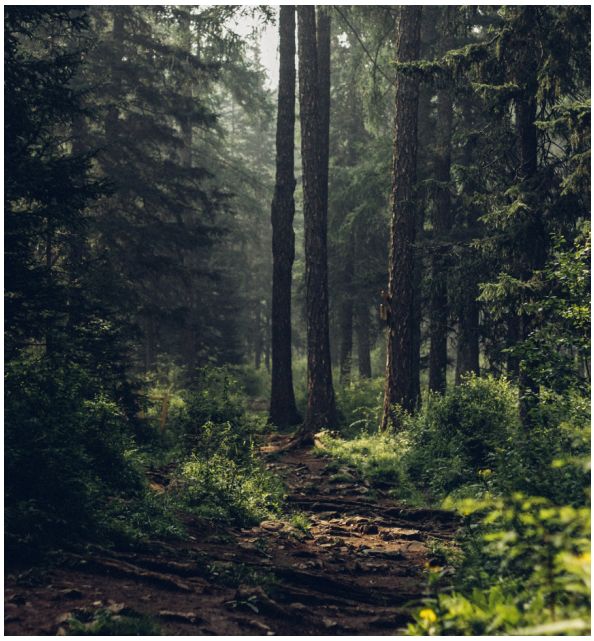
- Improve air quality by implementing an air quality management plan (baseline assessment, facilitate EPA recommendations) and a climate action plan
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint: measure and monitor greenhouse gas emissions by supporting and encouraging alternative transportation modes to private vehicles and green buildings
- Engage community in climate change mitigation and adaptation by implementing mitigation strategies such as events where the public can trade in appliances, and participate to light bulbs replacement program
- Develop resiliency to climate change

FOCUS AREA 02

Community Development & Land Use

Vision: The City of Aurora continues to develop our community's environmental, social and economic resources using best practices for our region.

Planning for prosperity, peace and security are ongoing goals of the City of Aurora, so that community development and land use remain a high priority. The City of Aurora contributions to regional plans for becoming the greenest region include the following extensive list of goals for community development and land use.



Goals for Community Development & Land Use

- Promote smart growth by promoting local and sustainable development that will reuse existing infrastructures and buildings, taking advantage of compact building designs, aggregate jobs and businesses, local food and organic farms
- Reduce the overall carbon footprint
- Enhance economies of scale
- Promote local goods and services by recognizing and supporting businesses who practice and promote sustainability
- Protect greenfields, key natural assets and open space
- Redevelop underutilized or contaminated properties
- Provide a variety of transportation choices, urban and social infrastructure based on population projections to potentially create transit oriented developments
- Collaborate with neighboring communities to jointly create sustainable developments
- Collaborate to restore prairie, wetland, forest and other important ecosystems in the community
- Enhance parks, open space, and recreational opportunities to be accessible to all residents
- Develop and implement a management plan to assure a long term vitality of the urban forest, and plant trees to sustain and renew the urban forest, as well as maximize carbon storage/ sequestration and energy savings
- Encourage turf replacement with sustainable landscaping alternatives
- Maintain beautiful sustainable landscapes and streetscapes to enhance gateways, business districts and important public spaces
- Adopt codes and incentives that guide sustainable development that maximizes social benefits and minimizes infrastructure demands
- Enforce and enact land use policies that protect valuable natural assets and support resiliency
- Promote site design that encourages the development of vibrant, walkable, commercial areas
- Protect sensitive aquifer areas via land use regulations
- Adopt and enforce a City Energy Code that also establishes green standards guidelines for renovations
- Use appropriate and dedicated vacant or abandoned properties for business incubator space
- Encourage / require high sustainability standards for new constructions
- Encourage and promote transportation oriented developments to create a network of such developments
- Enact codes to implement a native planting maintenance plan for any applicable new development and the preservation of other species
- Enact codes to implement the conservation of natural habitat for harbor and animal species which are dying out

FOCUS AREA 03

Education & Engagement

Vision: The City of Aurora actively engages its diverse group of citizens on the benefits of sustainable development and practices.

The City currently has many outlets to communicate with our constituents including websites, direct mail, public events, and customer service interactions. The Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board also provides critical citizen input for sustainable development plans and programs. Our ongoing goal is to continue to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable practices and resources to make our homes, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and schools more sustainable.

Goals for Education & Engagement

- Assure community education messages are accessible in Spanish and English
- Use community festivals, lectures, workshops, and other events to share information about environmental policies, guidelines, and expectations
- Collaborate to assure equitable access to sustainability education in the community by engaging public schools, profit and not for profit organizations
- Utilize strategic partnerships with other communities to promote sustainability
- Encourage the community to participate in sustainability initiatives and events
- Reach out and remove barriers to include all residents in civic affairs
- Create an award or recognition program to encourage and report sustainable behaviors for residents at home
- Create a recognition program to encourage and report sustainable actions by local businesses
- Educate the community on zero waste practices: waste reduction, recycling, reuse and repurposing
- Educate the community on the benefits and practices of green infrastructure
- Collaborate to raise watershed awareness, teach water conservation and foster stewardship in schools
- Engage the community in programs and special events to celebrate nature, such as Arbor day, Cinco de Mayo, and Earth day
- Seek citizen input in ongoing sustainability initiatives
- Implement zero waste practices among city divisions
- Partner with schools for public engagement initiatives and ensure data collection
- Engage the public in more frequent entertainment and educational opportunities along the Fox River promoting best environmental practices
- Encourage and promote the use of permeable paving in residential driveways
- Encourage and promote the use of photocatalytic paving in commercial parking and pedestrian areas

FOCUS AREA 04

Energy Efficiency, Conservation & Management

Vision: The City of Aurora continues to expand our green energy options and promote energy efficiency, with a goal to become a 50% renewable energy city by 2025.

The City plays an important role in encouraging the adoption of emerging technologies by setting an example in its own operations and construction projects. Delivery of City services represents another arena in which the City can improve its own operations and model behavior for the private sector. Projects to support this goal will be initiated by City staff after ongoing review of existing practices. The City will continue to pursue new opportunities to maintain service delivery at its current level while improving sustainable practices.

Goals for Energy Efficiency, Conservation & Management

- Implement energy efficiency measures that have a longer term payback such as upgrading power plants, and improve power plants efficiency
- Collaborate with utilities and other agencies to upgrade streetlight equipment and integrate smart technologies
- Utilize performance contracts to finance large energy efficiency projects
- Budget and plan for long-term energy efficiency equipment upgrades
- Procure, install and operate renewable energy systems at municipal and public facilities
- Support the adoption of renewable energy technologies in the community
- Promote and Support procurement of renewable energy through community choice aggregation
- Reduce energy consumption: participate in energy management challenges and programs
- Enact policies that support clean energy
- Adopt 'stretch codes' setting higher standards for energy efficiency through the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)
- Facilitate the adoption of renewable energy technologies by adapting building and zoning codes
- Engage the community in clean energy practices: partner with electric and gas utilities and renewable energy installers to promote energy efficiency programs to the community
- Create and enforce renewable energy requirements for new building development
- Publicly recognize institutional and private buildings that achieve specific energy efficiency targets
- Collaborate with utilities, local energy agencies and school districts to provide free energy audits
- Introduce water-conserving plumbing fixtures, electronic thermostats, and motion-sensor lighting in all City buildings
- Conduct an energy audit recruiting students and/or public utilities/energy organizations to collect data and establish a baseline of energy use

FOCUS AREA 05

Environmental Justice

Vision: The City of Aurora will ensure that all neighborhoods and regions in the city will have access to sustainable development opportunities.

The City has a long-standing reputation for respecting the rights of all its citizens. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental policies. The following goals specifically relate to this important aspect of sustainable development:

Goals for Environmental Justice

- Integrate historical and cultural assets through community programming
- Foster understanding of diverse cultural traditions by promoting culture diversity through public events
- Protect all residents from the effects of pollution by enhancing the 3Rs of solid waste management: reduce, reuse and recycle; and by encouraging the use of sustainable, reclaimed, or recycled building materials
- Promote community-based education to connect community members to existing services that support health and wellness
- Support and encourage better connections between all residents, particularly those in need, and profit or not for profit organizations to ensure high quality essential human services are available and utilized
- Collaborate to offer active and healthy lifestyle programs to residents by implementing dedicated fitness paths and infrastructures
- Integrate planning, policies and programs to accommodate residents of all ages and abilities
- Support social justice and equity throughout the community by involving schools, profit and not-for-profit organizations

FOCUS AREA 06

Resilient Community

Vision: The City of Aurora is a prosperous, healthy and safe city for all its citizens now, and 100 years from now by wisely planning for the well-being of our citizens.

A rapidly changing world is inevitable in years to come, and the resilience of the Aurora community is something that will drive our health and well-being in times of challenging change. The City will most likely have to adapt to climate change effects such as more frequent storms, extreme weather and shifting agricultural seasons. It is possible that there will be demand for our clean water from other drought stricken regions, as well as migration to our city from climate change refugees. Promoting a resilient community encourages citizens to take action now to protect the ongoing safety and prosperity of the City.

Goals for Resilient Community

- Promote beauty and livability in community design, stewardship, and through partnerships
- Improve and maintain diversity of plant and wildlife populations
- Create a community that is well prepared for disaster
- Collaborate with state and federal partners to prepare for and respond to pest and disease threats to public health
- Support balanced, active play for families
- Prioritize safe practices and collaborate to reduce accidental injuries and death
- Support innovative technologies for local food production and distribution
- Assess sustainability achievements relative to comparable cities
- Encourage residents and businesses to contribute their time and resources to sustain the community
- Integrate resiliency strategies into development policies and plans
- Work in partnership with local food providers and agencies to identify and develop strategies for eliminating food insecure areas and “food deserts” in Aurora

FOCUS AREA 07

Transportation & Infrastructure

Vision: The City of Aurora continues to develop and expand upon its green infrastructure.

The City will continue to invest in fuel-efficient vehicles, alternative energy sources, projects that implement sustainable roadways, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways while ensuring public safety remain an ongoing priority. Whenever possible, the City will encourage alternative transportation, reduced vehicle miles traveled and support sustainable energy use.

Goals for Transportation & Infrastructure

- Identify gaps in pedestrian and bicycle networks and barriers to active modes of transportation
- Improve a bicycle and pedestrian plan to enhance connectivity in the community and beyond
- Collaborate with regional partners to connect on and off-road bicycle facilities with existing and planned regional trail networks
- Provide more bicycle parking at municipal facilities, business districts, transit stations and in neighborhoods
- Maintain streets and sidewalks for efficiency and safety without harming natural resources
- Collaborate to provide alternative fuel infrastructure at public sites
- Advocate for broad adoption of clean fuel fleets (i.e. utilities, businesses, other agencies etc.)
- Strategically manage parking policies and priorities to advance sustainability
- Adapt building codes to accommodate and encourage alternate fuel infrastructure
- Collaborate to maintain and enhance transit facilities
- Expand local transit incentives and connections to meet identified needs
- Encourage residents and visitors to seek alternative modes of transportation including car sharing, carpooling, walking and biking
- Seek both public and private financing partnerships for infrastructure improvements
- Collaborate with businesses, industry leaders and other agencies to develop alternative fuel infrastructure
- Achieve higher fuel efficiency standards by switching to 90% cleaner fuels

FOCUS AREA 08

Waste Minimization, Reuse & Recyclying

Vision: The City of Aurora will develop pilot programs to move towards a zero waste, circular economy city by 2025.

The City of Aurora has a unique ability to influence residents and business behavior regarding waste disposal due to its historic role as a provider of these services. The city will continue to expand its waste minimization through reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycling efforts.

The City will raise awareness of the benefits of becoming a zero waste, circular economy city. Becoming a zero waste City can protect the land, water, and air from exposure to waste and toxins that are harmful to human, animal, and plant health. Creating zero waste pilot programs will demonstrate lifestyle choices that systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, and conserve and recover all resources.

Goals for Waste Minimization, Reuse & Recycling

- Promote and practice the 4 R's of reduce, reuse, recycle and repurpose
- Make public events "zero waste"
- Continue to promote home composting
- Create zero waste zones and pilot programs
- Create services for commercial organic waste disposal and collection
- Establish and strive for specific recycling goals
- Support regional efforts for developing a food scrap composting services and provide curbside recycling for residents
- Provide recycling and compost bins city wide alongside regular trash cans beginning with pilot projects in the downtown business district, parks, and entertainment venues
- Promote a circular economy where we reinvest discarded resources into the local economy with incentives and support for green, sustainable, and zero waste businesses.
- Provide incentives for entrepreneurs to create new green collar jobs from discarded resources
- Support bio-solid re-use in the community (e.g. landscaping)
- Engage with solid waste agencies to manage waste sustainably
- Ban or discourage the use of polystyrene to-go containers, single-serve food service and plastic bags city wide.
- Continue to promote community wide clean-up days
- Promote year round light bulb replacement program
- Promote year round trade in appliances replacement program
- Partner with regional municipalities to create a green energy production network that focus on a greener waste minimization program
- Adopt a policy by which elements of any structure to be demolished, be entirely or partially reused, or recycled to reduce waste

FOCUS AREA 09

Water Quality & Conservation

Vision: The City of Aurora will continue to protect and maintain its precious water resources for environmental, social and economic benefit to its residents and connected communities along the Fox River.

The founders of the City of Aurora were attracted by opportunities they saw emanating from the Fox River. The Fox River was once the economic engine of the City and is central to its revitalization strategies. Projects to support this goals will further implement best management practices and water conservation methods for new development and adaptive re-uses, which will reduce the loads on municipal water production and stormwater infrastructure.

Goals for Water Quality & Conservation

- Sustain supply of high-quality public water with comprehensive, sustainably managed water infrastructure
- Participate in watershed planning and stewardship efforts and implement municipal recommendations from the watershed plan
- Collaborate with regional initiatives to protect the Fox River Valley watershed
- Promote the reduction of community water consumption per capita, and participate in regional efforts and programs to conserve water
- Provide customer incentives to retrofit using high efficiency, water sense appliances and fixtures
- Collaborate with energy utilities to integrate water conservation into energy audits for residential customers
- Resolve to eliminate unnecessary landscape pesticides and fertilizer use on municipal property
- Riparian communities: Collaborate with other agencies to assess dam performance and support removal when feasible
- Build or retrofit paved surfaces with permeable materials
- Install and maintain bioswales, filter strips, tress, rain gardens, and other functional landscapes
- Collaborate to provide rain barrels, plants, and other resources to allow residents to capture and store rainwater
- Collaborate to enhance wetlands for improved ecosystem services
- Collaborate with regional and state agencies to sustainably manage stormwater
- Incorporate conservation practices into new development guidelines and incentives, and review and adopt codes to eliminate barriers to green infrastructure BMPs including cisterns, green roofs, bioswales, and permeable paving
- Enact codes that protect surface and groundwater from runoff and contamination
- Collaborate to enact a Pollinator Preservation Project by creating habitats in City parks and private gardens

Taking Action

Although local governments account for just a portion of our community's resources and carbon emissions, policy decisions have far reaching implications.

Taking Action

There are many goal within this plan that have implications for municipal policy and services, and concepts such as resource conservation, circular economy and life-cycle analysis that can be used to make future decisions.

Action by local governments has a symbolic value and demonstrates leadership that extends beyond the magnitude of energy efficiency, waste reduction or other actions taken. Through sustainable choices, officials may better progress the local quality of life and partner with motivated stakeholders for maximum effectiveness.

The intent for this plan is to serve as a vehicle to unite and engage key stakeholders – locally, within our region, and perhaps even nationally.

No one entity in the community - not local government, not businesses, and not residents - can improve Aurora's quality of life alone. The best way for an improved quality of life is to take action together.

Beyond our focus areas, the City is also committed to:

- Seek recognition for community sustainability achievements
- Advocate for federal and state policies and investment that support municipal advances in sustainability
- Seek collaboration with the business sector to support municipal sustainability
- Partner with other local governments to achieve efficiency and sustainability
- Partner with non-governmental organization to advance sustainability in the community and regionally
- Support or create an interdisciplinary team to coordinate internal sustainability efforts
- Dedicate staff to direct sustainability initiatives
- Leverage state, federal and private grants and resources to advance sustainability efforts
- Educate and train staff on sustainability practices
- Achieve third party certification for sustainable public facilities
- Use the GRC2 Framework to update a sustainability plan and formally adopt it
- Adopt an environmental purchasing policy
- Manage special events sustainably
- Integrate sustainability into capital planning

Conclusion

The City of Aurora Sustainability Plan identifies ways the City can become more sustainable and improve the quality of life for all of our residents.

While the City has a key role to play in the implementation of this plan, the impact of these actions on Aurora as a whole depends largely on the embrace and motivation of the community. More and more residents in Aurora are aware of the necessity to live more sustainably. The City created the citizen-led Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board to provide a vital link between City staff and residents.

There is much work to do to ensure the prosperity and health of our city. As we expand the possibilities of what we can achieve with regional partnerships, we remain always dedicated to making Aurora a beautiful place for families, businesses, and innovators to thrive and prosper.

To find out more about current and planned City of Aurora sustainable initiatives, visit www.aurora-il.org and consider attending one of our monthly Sustainable Aurora Advisory Board meetings.

Glossary

Alternative Energy - Usually environmentally friendly, this is energy from uncommon sources such as wind power or solar energy, not fossil fuels.

Aquifer - An underground geological formation or group of formations containing water. Aquifers are natural sources of groundwater for wells and springs.

Biodegradable - Substances which, when left alone, break down and are absorbed into the eco-system.

Brownfield - Abandoned, idled, or under-utilized industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Carbon Emissions - Polluting carbon substances, such as carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. Also referred to as greenhouse gas emissions
(GHGs), carbon emissions are mostly produced by motor vehicles and industrial processes and form pollutants in the atmosphere.

Carbon Footprint - A measure of impact on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) - This regional agency integrates planning for land use and transportation in the seven counties of northeastern Illinois. CMAP combined the region's two previously separate transportation and land-use planning organizations - Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) - into a single agency. CMAP is now developing the region's first truly comprehensive plan for land use and transportation, 'Go To 2040.' *www.cmap.illinois.gov*

Climate Change - Term used to imply a significant change from one climatic condition to another. In some cases, 'climate change' has been used synonymously with the term, 'global warming'; scientists however, tend to use the term in the wider sense to also include natural changes in climate.

Composting - The controlled biological decomposition of organic material in the presence of air. Controlled methods of composting include mechanical mixing and aerating, ventilating the materials by dropping them through a vertical series of aerated chambers, or placing the compost in piles out in the open air and mixing it or turning it periodically.

Conservation - The protection of plants and animals, natural areas, and interesting and important structures and buildings, especially from the damaging effects of human activity.

Cost-Benefit Analysis - An economic method for assessing the benefits and costs of achieving alternative health-based standards at given levels of health protection.

Cost-Effective Alternative - An alternative method identified after analysis as being the best available in terms of reliability, performance, and cost. Although costs are one important consideration, a cost-effective alternative is not always the least expensive alternative. For example, when selecting a method for street resurfacing, upfront
cost of materials must be equated with long-term effectiveness and environmental effects of the resurfacing material chosen.

Embodied Energy - The total energy used to extract, process, package, transport, install, and recycle or dispose of goods and services. Embodied energy is a methodology which aims to find the sum total of the energy necessary for an entire product lifecycle.

Emission - Pollution discharged into the atmosphere from smokestacks, other vents, and surface areas of commercial or industrial facilities; from residential chimneys; and from motor vehicle, locomotive, or aircraft exhausts.

Energy Star - A joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. *www.energystar.gov*

Energy Efficiency - Refers to products or systems using less energy to do the same or better job than conventional products or systems. Energy efficiency saves energy, saves money on utility bills, and helps protect the environment by reducing the demand for electricity.

Global Warming - An increase in the near surface temperature of the Earth. Global warming has occurred in the distant past as the result of natural influences, but the term is most often used to refer to the warming predicted to occur as a result of increased emissions of greenhouse gases, otherwise known as climate change.

Greenbelt - A stretch of park, open space or other natural setting functioning as a buffer.

Greenhouse Gases (GHG) - Gases in the Earth's atmospheres that produce the greenhouse effect. Changes in the concentration of certain greenhouse gases, due to human activity such as fossil fuel burning, increase the risk of global climate change. Greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, halogenated fluorocarbons, ozone, perfluorinated carbons, and hydrofluorocarbons.

GreenTown Conference - Is a one-day conference designed to help create sustainable communities. Those in attendance include mayors and elected officials, public works directors, park district directors, planners, developers, architects, landscape architects, builders, school leaders and others interested in seeing how a community can become greener.
www.greentownconference.com

Greywater - Waste water that does not contain sewage or fecal contamination (such as from the shower) and can be reused for irrigation after filtration.

Green Washing - A term used to describe the practice of companies spinning their product lines as being environmentally friendly as a means to appeal to consumers, persuading them to buy that product rather than another or accept a change in a product.

Habitat - The place where a population (e.g. human, animal, plant, microorganism) lives and its surroundings, both living and non-living.

Household Hazardous Waste - Hazardous products used and disposed of by residential as opposed to industrial consumers. Includes paints, stains, varnishes, solvents, pesticides, and other materials or products containing volatile chemicals that can catch fire, react or explode, or that are corrosive or toxic.

HVAC – This stands for "heating, ventilating, and air conditioning". HVAC is sometimes also referred to as climate control, and entails the cooling and heating equipment for a particular building.

Illinois Recycling Organization - A not-for-profit organization, was formed in 1980 as the Illinois Association of Recycling Centers, and changed its name to IRA in 1990. It currently has 250 members consisting of municipal, county, and state recycling coordinators, businesses, haulers and processors, not-for-profit organizations, consultants, and manufacturers of recycled-content products. www.illinoisrecycles.org

Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) - A highly efficient conventional lighting option that uses a diode to emit visible light when electricity
is applied, much like a light bulb. When many LEDs are side-by-side, they can create pictures, such as the scrolling red LED signs found on business advertisements.

Life Cycle Analysis - Evaluating the true cost of a product, technique or technology over its entire lifetime. In practice, a choice may be more costly upfront, but can result in reduced operations, maintenance, and/or replacement costs over its useable lifetime resulting in a more eco-friendly and cost-effective solution.

Life Cycle of a Product - All stages of a product's development, from extraction of fuel for power to production, marketing, use, and disposal.

Pervious Surface - Surfaces that allow water to penetrate or infiltrate into the underlying soil or rock. For instance, natural soil is highly pervious, while asphalt is impervious.

Preservation - The act of keeping something the same or of preventing it from being damaged.

Roundabout - A type of road junction at which traffic enters a one-way stream around a central island. In the United States it is commonly known as a "rotary" or a "traffic circle." In the US, the traffic flow around the central island of a roundabout is counterclockwise.

Smart Growth - An urban planning and transportation theory that concentrates growth in the center of a city to avoid urban sprawl; and advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, complete streets, mixed-use development with a range of housing choices. Smart growth values long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over a short-term focus. Its goals are to achieve a unique sense of community and place; expand the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources; and promote public health.

Sustainability - Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

U.S. Green Buildings Council - A non-profit trade organization founded in 1993 that promotes sustainability in how buildings are designed, built and operated. The USGBC is best known for the development of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system and GreenBuild, a green building conference that promotes the green building industry, including environmentally responsible materials, sustainable architecture techniques and public policy.
www.usgbc.org

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) - Any organic compound that participates in atmospheric photochemical reactions except those designated by EPA as having negligible photochemical reactivity.

Zero Waste - A philosophy that encourages the rethinking of actions and decisions so that waste is reduced to zero. Zero waste introduces the concept of circular systems in which as much waste as possible is reused, similar to the way that resources are reused in nature.

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THERE'S *Something* HAPPENING HERE

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