

SECTION 3 **REPORT**

HOMER GLEN GREEN VISION STATEMENT

An attractive, distinctive, and environmentally sustainable community that protects its valuable water resources, natural landscapes, wildlife habitats, open spaces, and agricultural settings essential to the well-being and quality of life of Homer Glen residents.



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Green Communities Demonstration Program is to help communities identify environmental challenges and plan for a sustainable future. In 2002 the Village of Homer Glen was chosen as one of sixteen communities in the State of Illinois to receive a grant for the Governor's Green Communities Demonstration Program. This grant, administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, provided funds to conduct an innovative visioning process to protect the environment and enhance community well being. The visioning process allowed the community to identify challenges, trends, assets, and develop appropriate strategies for addressing environmental

issues. As stewards of our existing natural resources, it is vital that we preserve our rural environment, character, and way of life, while integrating managed growth and protecting our environmental resources. The vision is one that foresees the desired state of the environment projected 20-30 years into the future.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Village of Homer Glen incorporated just three years ago because residents wanted to control their own destiny in this rapidly growing community. More important, residents wanted to change the trend of development from typical suburban sprawl to well-planned sustainable development that protected the community's valuable resources. Homer Glen is situated approximately thirty miles southwest of Chicago in fast-growing Will County, Illinois. The Village encompasses approximately 23 square miles and has about 24,000 residents.

Homer Township has experienced unprecedented growth with a 520% increase in population from 1970 to the year 2000. Projections forecast a more than 50% increase in population over the next 20 years.

This unique community includes major watersheds, Spring Creek to the south and Long Run Creek to the north. Will County Forest Preserve land traverse the southern part of the Village. Homer Glen has abundant native plants and wildlife, public open space, greenways, wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, ecological diversity, farmland and scenic beauty. More than 50% of the Homer Glen planning area is undeveloped.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Homer Glen has a Green Vision that grew and developed with ideas and commitment of a community dedicated to protecting its natural resources while faced with increasing pressure

to develop open land. This report is the account of how the Green Vision began, evolved, and resulted in a plan designed by and for the people of Homer Glen.

The Green Communities Demonstration Program Grant Steering Committee (Steering Committee) was established to oversee the program. The Steering Committee included business and community members, local government officials, and individuals representing environmental organizations including The Conservation Foundation, Long Run Creek Watershed Planning Committee, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) was chosen to facilitate and provide technical support throughout the visioning process.

The Steering Committee engaged a broad base of community members to serve as stakeholders in the visioning process. The recruitment process began by using the Asset-Based Community Development technique of identifying a list of potential stakeholders. This technique focuses on identifying the community's abundance of assets including skills of its citizens, dedication of community organizations, and resources of formal institutions. The result was a stakeholder group representing residents, business owners, farmers, landowners, developers, government officials, public safety officials, schools, senior citizens, athletic groups, community organizations, and religious organizations. This brought a diverse group together with a high level of individual skill and knowledge to the vision process. The participation of a broad-based group of stakeholders will play a significant role in the success of implementing the goals and objectives.



The stakeholders came together through a series of community-wide participatory workshops. The result was a unified green vision that states:

Homer Glen will be an attractive, distinctive, and environmentally sustainable community that protects its valuable water resources, natural landscapes, wildlife habitats, open spaces and agricultural settings essential to the well-being and quality of life of Homer Glen residents.

This vision contains six major categories. These categories were identified during three large community-wide meetings that occurred during the first half of 2003. Stakeholders worked in small groups and in large assemblies to define and refine a goal statement for each of the categories. Goal statements were written for each of the following categories:

- Community Image and Character
- Natural Resources, Habitat & Wildlife
- Open Space
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Water Resources

For each goal, a set of measurable and quantifiable objectives was created. Recommended actions for achieving the objectives were later incorporated.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The central component of the Green Vision Plan is its goals. For the purpose of the planning process, a goal was defined as follows: “A general statement of a desired future.” The goals give guidance for all actions to follow.

Working at tables, stakeholders began by identifying all of the issues facing Homer Glen that touch upon the natural resource base. These were discussed and voted on to achieve agreement on the most significant issues. Next, goal statements were made in direct response to each identified issue. Goals were written, worked on and refined in a step-by-step process over the course of the three meetings.

The creation of goals was accompanied by the creation of a series of objectives for each of the goals. An objective was defined as follows: “A more precise, sometimes quantifiable, statement of how to reach a goal, with multiple objectives for each goal.” The objectives become quantifiable milestones along the path toward achieving a goal.

To supplement the goals and objectives from the community meetings, action steps were written with the professional advice of NIPC.

The goals and objectives were supported with maps of the Village’s critical resource areas. Using their own knowledge of the local landscape, stakeholders mapped existing resources and their hopes for new resources in an environmentally-sensitive town center and conservation neighborhood concepts. Through the mapping, participants indicated the areas of high resource value that will require careful planning for preservation, especially as the Village continues to develop in future years.



Community Image and Character

GOAL:

Maintain and enhance an attractive and distinctive community that builds upon and preserves Homer Glen’s countryside character, unique natural resources and abundance of open space.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote attractive and well-designed residential and commercial developments that meet community development goals.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Assess zoning, subdivision, and building codes for the aesthetic and durability considerations for new buildings and developments.
- b. Identify communities that achieve this objective for use as a benchmark in evaluating and strengthening Homer Glen’s codes.

- c. Conduct workshops and/or field trips for trustees and plan commissioners to evaluate real examples from other communities.
 - d. Revise Homer Glen codes, as necessary.
2. Identify special character areas, tailoring growth to ensure that unique natural resources are supported and enhanced.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See recommended actions under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife (objectives 1 and 2), Open Space (objective 2), and Water Resources (objective 10).
3. Create an attractive, centralized and distinctive town center, with parks, recreation center, municipal building, and cultural center accessible by walking or multi-use trail.
- Recommended Actions:*
- a. Evaluate Homer Glen Comprehensive Land Use Plan for criteria and recommendations regarding a town center.
 - b. Gain Village Board adoption of the recommendations of the Homer Glen Town Center Task Force regarding scope, size, land uses and purposes.
 - c. Based on the current land use map, zoning map, natural resource inventory, and road network, identify and prioritize potential locations for a multi-use town center.
 - d. Consider the Green Vision town center design charrette for a conceptual design.
4. Hire progressive planning and marketing consultants to work with the Village to develop a town center plan and implementation mechanism.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Conduct workshops and/or field trips for trustees and plan commissioners to review good examples from north-eastern Illinois and beyond.
- b. Implement the following steps to realize the Town Center objectives identified above:
 - 1. In Village comprehensive plan and zoning: consider down-zoning commercial parcels in the immediate vicinity of town center area
 - 2. Prepare a sub-area plan recommending changes to the zoning code to allow a mix of uses, by right, within the town center (e.g., civic, commercial, residential, and recreation/conservation)
 - 3. Add additional detail to the Green Vision design and present it to community stakeholders for further discussion
 - 4. Begin discussions with current landowner(s) of selected site(s) regarding their use in a town center
 - 5. Clearly define what “green” design means in this project, including: the preservation of natural resource features, sustainable water resource and storm water management, natural landscaping, and green architecture for buildings within the center. Identify and incorporate these design elements to serve as civic models for environmentally sustainable design throughout the community.
 - 6. Require developers to construct planned rights-of-way (vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle/multi-use trail) in the vicinity of the town center to achieve critical transportation linkages.

7. Develop pedestrian/ bicycle/ multi-use trail connections from the town center to nearby civic and commercial facilities, particularly libraries, schools, and parks.
5. Minimize negative visual impacts of development such as light pollution, obtrusive or unsightly signage, and parking areas.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify appropriate existing ordinances from other communities that address lighting, signage, landscaping, and architectural character.
 - b. Select desired criteria and revise/adopt appropriate Homer Glen ordinance language.
 - c. Undertake design and appearance improvements for major roadways that pass through Homer Glen, including landscaping, lighting, public signage, and community “gateway” features.
6. Maintain and enhance the Village’s rural atmosphere.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify and preserve sites and buildings with local historic and cultural interest and value, and promote an appreciation of the agricultural roots and heritage of the Homer Glen area.
- b. Assess and implement (as appropriate) farmland and open space preservation requirements.
- c. Assess Homer Glen’s land use and zoning criteria (e.g., for appropriate mix of residential and commercial development as well as residential densities) and revise, as appropriate.

- d. Request Village staff and consultants to meet with owners of farmland to discuss and promote farmland preservation opportunities and immediate challenges.

7. Safeguard Homer Glen’s environmental features and natural resources as distinguishing features of the community.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See recommendations under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife (objectives 2, 4, 5, 6), Open Space (objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6) and Water Resources (objectives 2, 3, 6, 7, 9).
8. Continue to involve community residents in planning, decision making, and plan implementation.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Sponsor programs, events, and celebrations that can stimulate public involvement and participation, foster a strong community spirit and identity, and bring together residents from various subdivisions on a regular basis.
9. Find ways to preserve the agricultural uses that contribute to the rural character of the community.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See objective 6, above.
10. Ensure community visual image within each area of the Village so that all parts contribute to the overall village image.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Design and locate public sites and buildings so that they become focal points and landmarks within the community.
11. Identify and protect significant historic sites, structures, and ruins.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Perform inventory, in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Historic Preservation, of historically significant buildings and sites.
- b. Develop a plan to protect identified sites.



Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife

GOAL:

Preservation, protection and enhancement of the existing and potential natural resources and wildlife habitat that are enjoyed by Village residents.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Prepare an area-wide inventory that identifies natural resources and habitats within Homer Glen.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Utilize Illinois Natural Areas, wetlands, ponds, streams, floodplains, soils, woodlands, recharge zones, and any other relevant natural resource layers as a starting point.
- b. Evaluate the inclusion of additional and/or improved inventories that may not be digital at this time; in particular, the NRCS wetland inventory to replace the NWI.

- c. Utilizing knowledge from local residents and expertise from local/regional resource agencies and organizations, perform field work and map analysis to identify additional local resource sites. (Alternatively, as funds permit, hire a specialist to perform the inventory.)
- d. Combine these inventories into a comprehensive natural resource and habitat inventory.

2. Prepare a plan based on the area-wide inventory to preserve and manage existing and potential natural resources and habitats emphasizing larger, connected areas rather than small, isolated pockets.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify “critical” resource areas to be protected from development: wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, and other surface waters.
- b. Identify and map other “important” resource areas, particularly woodland complexes, hydric soils, wetland clusters, and potential wildlife corridors. Draw areas around “large” natural areas and/or clusters of smaller areas on maps.
- c. Connect nearby areas with designated wildlife/environmental corridors, utilizing streams and floodplains and utility rights of way as the connecting corridors, where appropriate.
- d. Request the Environment Committee to prepare and adopt a “Natural Resource Protection Plan”, with accompanying map(s).
- e. Request the Environment Committee to work with the Homer Glen Plan and Zoning Commissions to revise existing comprehensive plan and zoning codes to reflect compatible land uses in resource-rich areas.

- f. Work with Will County Forest Preserve District, Homer Township, and other agencies and organizations to acquire wildlife habitats, environmentally sensitive lands, and open space buffers within the Village's planning jurisdiction.
 - g. Work with Commonwealth Edison to identify appropriate landscaping and management techniques to protect and enhance habitat functions of major utility rights of way.
 - h. Implement mechanisms for long-term restoration and management (e.g., invasive species control) of protected natural lands.
 - i. Where feasible, seek matching funds from relevant federal and state agencies to accomplish land acquisition, restoration, and management objectives.
3. Educate residents about the role that natural resources and wildlife play in maintaining a high quality of life in the Village and about residents' role in protection and restoration efforts.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Provide effective signage throughout the community that identifies natural areas and their functions and benefits.
 - b. Develop naturalist and interpretive programs through local parks and open spaces in cooperation with the Will County Forest Preserve District.
4. Adopt design guidelines and ordinances for new development that support the preservation and protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify specific protection priorities for Homer Glen based on a natural resource protection plan (recommendation 2.D, above).
 - b. Conduct workshops and/or field trips for trustees and plan commissioners to review progressive approaches in other northeastern Illinois communities.
 - c. Request the Plan Commission and the Zoning Commission to evaluate the NIPC publication, "Conservation Design Resource Manual: Language and Guidelines for Updating Local Ordinances", as well as codes from other communities with similar objectives to see appropriate ordinance language and approaches.
 - d. Request the Plan and Zoning Commissions to amend Homer Glen codes to restrict new development in identified natural resource protection areas. In particular, these commissions should work with the Storm Water Task Force to implement ordinance language to protect isolated wetlands which are currently unprotected by either federal or state regulations.
5. Develop incentive measures for landowners and developers to preserve and create natural areas, including the use of conservation easements.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Evaluate various potential techniques, such as those referenced in NIPC publication, "Conservation Design Resource Manual: Language and Guidelines for Updating Local Ordinances".
- b. Work with The Conservation Foundation and other experts to identify and adopt specific incentive techniques and programs that can be incorporated into the codes of Homer Glen.

- c. Identify landowner programs, such as Partners for Wildlife, that provide technical and financial resources for landowners (see list in NIPC publication “Protecting Nature in Your Community”).
 - d. Encourage private landowners to designate sensitive natural resource areas as conservation easements. Work with The Conservation Foundation and other experts to set up this program, including the identification of property tax incentives.
 - e. See additional recommendations under Open Space.
6. Encourage natural landscaping on both public and private properties throughout the Village.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Implement various recommendations found in NIPC publication “Natural Landscaping for Public Officials: A Source Book.”
- b. Conduct workshops and/or field trips for trustees and plan commissioners to evaluate natural landscaping approaches in other northeastern Illinois communities.
- c. Evaluate and amend Homer Glen landscape code and/or weed ordinance to allow/encourage natural landscaping on private property.
- d. Implement a natural landscaping ordinance to protect native trees, remnant woodlands, or other natural landscapes.
- e. Amend appropriate Homer Glen codes to require natural landscaping for storm water facilities (and other facilities, as appropriate).

- f. Adopt a policy to require natural landscaping features for all new Homer Glen public facilities, and retrofit landscapes of existing facilities to serve as demonstration projects.
 - g. Work with township, county and state road agencies to implement natural landscaping policies for road rights of way within Homer Glen.
7. Encourage access by community residents, especially children, to public wildlife habitats and natural areas.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Link existing and proposed residential development, parks, and school sites to natural areas via wildlife/ environmental corridors and multi-use trails.
- b. Encourage/require clustering of new residential developments to preserve and/or restore natural areas adjacent to homes.

Open Space

GOAL:

Protection and enhancement of the extensive open space areas that are essential to the overall image and character of Homer Glen.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop protection mechanisms, including ordinances where appropriate, for:
 - Wetlands
 - Stream corridors
 - Agricultural lands
 - Scenic views
 - Woodlands
 - Sensitive soils
 - Floodplains
 - Wildlife habitats
 - Groundwater recharge zones
 - Other natural areas

Recommended Actions:

- a. Evaluate and adopt, as appropriate, ordinance language from NIPC model ordinances and/or progressive ordinances from other northeastern Illinois communities (such as the DuPage and Lake Countywide storm water ordinances and the Kane County agricultural protection program).
 - b. See additional recommendations under Water Resources.
2. Develop an interconnected greenway system—an “Emerald Necklace”—that links open space throughout the Village.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify and map a greenway network (see recommendations under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife) and formally adopt this network as part of the Homer Glen comprehensive plan and zoning code. Coordinate greenway identification with neighboring communities and the Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Plan (from NIPC and Openlands Project).
- b. Develop ordinance provisions that restrict development in designated greenways and provide direction/incentives to developers for land set-asides (see recommendation 3.C, below).
- c. Acquire greenway components as public open space in cooperation with the Will County Forest Preserve District, Homer Township, and other open space agencies and organizations.

3. Require land set-asides for open space as part of development process.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Request the Planning Commission to work with experts, such as The Conservation Foundation, to identify appropriate criteria for the amounts and types of land for set-asides.
 - b. Request the Village Board to create a conservation design task force.
 - c. Request the Conservation Design Task Force, working with the Zoning Commission, to evaluate cluster development as a means to achieve open space in residential projects. Incorporate these criteria into zoning and/or subdivision codes.
4. Retain an environmentally sensitive engineering/planning firm to review development proposals.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify qualifications for “environmentally sensitive firms”.
 - b. Develop a list of potentially qualified firms, perform interviews, and select/hire preferred firm(s).
5. Develop a plan for open space protection and acquisition that encompasses the broad objectives of farmland protection, natural resource preservation, passive recreation, trails, sustainability, visual relief, and limited development densities.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See related objectives under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife.
- b. Draw areas around the large open space opportunity areas on Green Vision maps. Connect nearby areas with designated wildlife/ environmental corridors, utilizing streams and floodplains as the connecting corridors, where appropriate (see

objective 2 “Emerald Necklace” above).

- c. Request the Parks and Recreation Committee to prepare and adopt an “Open Space Protection Plan” and map. Integrate this plan into the Village’s comprehensive plan and zoning code.
 - d. Work with Will County Forest Preserve District, Homer Township, and other agencies and organizations to acquire sensitive lands identified in the plan.
 - e. Where feasible, seek matching funds from relevant federal and state agencies to accomplish land acquisition and management objectives.
6. Develop an implementation mechanism for the open space plan that addresses funding, long-term management and maintenance, and land-owner education needs.
 7. Identify and implement ways to protect and maintain the agricultural roots and heritage of the Homer Glen area.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify and preserve sites and buildings with historic agricultural interest and value.
 - b. Assess and implement (as appropriate) farmland and open space preservation requirements.
 - c. See related recommendations under Community Image and Character.
8. Adopt conservation design guidelines and ordinances that would maintain low average density while allowing ample common and natural areas.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Evaluate density recommendations/requirements in the Village’s comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance. Modify requirements, as appropriate.



Parks and Recreation

GOAL:

A Parks and Recreation system that promotes healthy lifestyles by offering active and passive recreational opportunities for residents, employees, and visitors, and enhances the overall image and character of the community.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create the means and mechanisms to own, manage, and maintain parks and recreation opportunities.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Request the Parks and Recreation Committee to evaluate alternative approaches for establishing a parks department or other effective mechanism.
- b. Include in this evaluation the experience of neighboring municipalities and seek advice from the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association.
- c. Seek a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Committee on how the Village may establish and

fund an entity to own, manage, and maintain a parks program in Homer Glen.

2. Cooperate with citizens, community groups, and various levels of government to develop an open space and recreation plan that reflects goals and objectives from the Green Vision process. This process should respect land differences for appropriate uses.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Convene a committee of citizens, community groups, Village officials, local school districts, the Will County Forest Preserve District, Homer Township, and other relevant organizations to begin to develop the outline for a comprehensive open space/recreation plan.
 - b. Build upon the previously referenced Natural Resource Protection Plan to incorporate other related parks and open space opportunities.
3. Develop design guidelines for development of commercial property that encourage trail development and offer recreation amenities for employees.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Work with the chamber of commerce to identify potential trail opportunities and linkages.
4. Develop guidelines for incorporation of trail systems and linkages to existing and planned trail systems into the site design plans for all significant commercial developments.
 5. Develop a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities for all, including special needs, such as neighborhoods, community parks, trails and

open spaces that link to and complement the regional open space, parks, and recreation facilities in the Homer Glen area.

6. Develop a multi-use park, commons, and recreation center as part of a new town center to create a central gathering place and activity area.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See objectives 3 & 4 under Community Image and Character.
7. Develop a network of multi-use trails and pathways to provide connections between subdivisions, schools, parks, and commercial areas.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify opportunities for trails connections based on the Northeastern Illinois Regional Green ways and Trails Plan (from NIPC and Openlands Project).
 - b. Coordinate trail identification with efforts to identify greenways and wildlife corridors (see objectives 1 and 2 under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife, and objective 2 under Open Space).
 - c. Develop criteria for trail opportunities and trail design based on recreational, transportation, greenway, and other related objectives.
 - d. Prepare and adopt a community greenway/trails plan.
8. Identify creative funding mechanisms in order to achieve and implement park, open space, and recreation objectives.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Implement open space set-aside (and/or cash donation) requirements for developers and a conservation easement program for private landowners (see for example objectives 3 and 4, above).

- b. Investigate using utility easements for recreational uses.
- c. Investigate and identify joint recreational sites and facilities with local school districts.
- d. Seek matching funds from state agencies (e.g., IDNR) for land acquisition and trail and facility construction, when available.
- e. Continue to encourage and utilize volunteer efforts in achieving expanded recreational opportunities.



Transportation

GOAL:

A coordinated, sustainable system of roadways, pedestrian facilities, recreational pathways and public transportation services that provides for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians and enhances the countryside character and environmental amenities of the Village.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote the Homer Glen vision by requiring wide, naturally landscaped corridors for major roadways – for example, requiring 80-foot minimum right-of-way for major roadways in new residential developments – and consider these features integral to the transportation plan (Note: this is not a recommendation for wide pavement widths).

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify and evaluate existing roadway natural landscaping programs (e.g., the State of Iowa's county roadside restoration programs).
 - b. Select and begin to implement relevant program elements in Homer Glen, including appropriate signage that identifies special features like wildflower landscapes.
 - c. Review and amend the Subdivision Ordinance for all street classifications to establish standards for sustainable right of way and pavement widths, setbacks, sidewalks, natural landscaping, non-intrusive lighting, and holistic storm water management.
 - d. Identify key roadway corridors (e.g., gateways, boulevard streets) that would distinguish Homer Glen from nearby communities and determine where naturalistic designs should receive highest priority.
 - e. Create distinctive, naturalistic, identity-giving gateway treatments at the entries to the Village along the major roadways, at locations that will provide maximum visual impact.
 - f. Conduct workshops and/or field trips for trustees and plan commissioners to see "green" transportation design examples from northeastern Illinois and beyond.
 - g. Coordinate with township, county, and state highway departments to implement consistent design and landscaping procedures throughout the Village.
2. Develop a comprehensive network of multi-use trails and greenways to link residential subdivisions with schools, parks, shopping areas, public facilities, open spaces, forest preserves and other multi-use trails in the area.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See related objectives under Parks and Recreation.
 - b. Request the Homer Glen Trails Task Force to implement this objective.
 - c. Coordinate with neighboring communities and park districts, the Will County Forest Preserve District, and Homer Township in the identification of potential trail and greenway linkages.
 - d. Seek matching funds from state sources in the development of trails systems.
 - e. Request the Planning Commission to work with residential and commercial developers to create links for regional trails as well as local connections to open space, schools, shopping, and public facilities.
 - f. Request the Trails Task Force to develop trail design standards as standard specifications for new developments.
 - g. Request the Parks and Recreation Committee and the Environment Committee to prepare a Homer Glen greenway and trails plan. Recommend this plan to the Village Board for adoption.
3. Develop an integrated transportation and land use plan for the Village that identifies an efficient pattern of land use and a transportation-system design that minimizes congestion and through-traffic on roads under Village jurisdiction.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See relevant recommendations in the Village's comprehensive plan.

4. Incorporate an assessment of the impact of regional transportation plans (for example, I-355, Caton Farm/Bruce Road Strategic Regional Arterial plan) into the integrated transportation and land use plan.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Ensure that the extension of I-355 is coordinated with the upgrading of the arterial system and service roads within the community.
5. Improve transportation safety on existing roadways by evaluating the need for guardrails, street lighting, roadway profiles and other approaches.
6. Work with state and county transportation agencies to achieve these objectives along state and county routes in to, out of, and through the Village.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Encourage (and require, where feasible) state, county, and township road agencies to conform to Homer Glen design standards for natural landscaping, sustainable storm water management, setbacks, and lighting.
7. Work with regional agencies and neighboring municipalities to expand opportunities for public transportation within Homer Glen.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Review the current Regional Transportation Plan for northeastern Illinois (RTP) for proposed public transportation opportunities.
- b. Identify potential opportunities for new bus and/or transit routes and connections.
- c. Make recommendations to Metra, PACE, and RTA, as appropriate.



Water Resources

GOAL:

Promote plentiful, high quality surface and groundwater resources that protect the quality of life for residents and all ecosystems, especially wetlands, by reducing the impacts on these systems.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Gather and assess data needed to protect key water resource areas and to develop growth strategies. Data to be collected, which will help to determine carrying capacity, includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Hydrology and hydraulic studies
 - Soil analysis
 - Historic surveys
 - Longitudinal profiles
 - Vegetation
 - Stormwater runoff
 - Floodplains, wetlands, etc.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify major watersheds in Homer Glen and implement planning at that scale.
- b. Work with local resource organizations and agencies (e.g., Will/South Cook Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS) in the identification of data needs

and the assessment of water resource problems and opportunities.

- c. Evaluate the adequacy of existing floodplain mapping (e.g., how recent it was studied and mapped) and request/make improvements, as appropriate.
 - d. Update the existing wetland inventory by utilizing the NRCS wetland inventory to replace the outdated National Wetland Inventory, as appropriate.
 - e. Apply for watershed planning funds from IEPA and/or IDNR to develop more detailed plans, as needed.
2. Develop an education program that:
 - Educates stakeholders (e.g., elected officials, residents, landowners, business owners, developers) as to how land use affects water resources and to promote low impact development and green development.
 - Educates the educators, establishes environmental education in schools, develops interpretive signage for natural resource features and drainage, and establishes a "Watershed Watch" program and voluntary monitoring.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Utilize existing educational materials developed by NIPC and others, and tailor to local needs.
- b. Schedule presentations on selected topics to Village Board members and Planning and Zoning commissions.
- c. Identify topics of interest to local residents (e.g., retention and detention pond management, stream corridor landscaping, and sustainable lawn maintenance) and schedule seminars to present information and answer questions.

- d. Work with experts like The Conservation Foundation to develop an educational program and citizen stream monitoring program for teachers, students, and other interested residents.
 - e. Implement a signage program to identify all streams and significant wetlands, particularly at trail and road crossings.
 - f. See related recommendations for interpretive facilities under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife (objective 3).
3. Develop and enforce protection mechanisms, including ordinances, that support water resource goals and objectives for:
- Wetlands
 - Stream corridors
 - Sustainable stormwater management
 - Groundwater recharge and protection

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify more specific objectives and criteria for sustainable water resource management (e.g., minimize increases in stormwater runoff volumes and rates, maximize groundwater recharges, etc.).
- b. Request the Storm Water Task Force to evaluate existing ordinance language for stormwater drainage and detention, soil erosion and sediment control, floodplain management, and stream and wetland protection. Consider, in particular, NIPC model ordinances and/or progressive ordinances from other northeastern Illinois communities (such as the DuPage and Lake County-wide stormwater ordinances).

- c. Request the Storm Water Task Force to compare existing codes, including the Will Countywide Stormwater Ordinance, identifying specific gaps where changes may be needed (e.g., recommend protection for unregulated isolated wetlands).
 - d. Request the Storm Water Task Force to make changes to existing ordinances, as appropriate, and recommend changes to the Village Board.
 - e. Request the Storm Water Task Force, in cooperation with the Zoning Commission, to evaluate related requirements in zoning and subdivision codes and make changes, as necessary, and recommend to the Village Board for adoption (see NIPC publication "Conservation Design Resource Manual: Language and Guidelines for Updating Local Ordinances").
4. Retain environmentally sensitive engineering/planning firms to review development proposals.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Create a Conservation Design Task Force.
 - b. Request the Conservation Design Task Force to identify qualifications for "environmentally sensitive firms."
 - c. Request the Conservation Design Task Force to develop a list of potentially qualified firms, perform interviews, and recommend to the Village Board the selection/hire of preferred firm(s).
5. Tie in land use studies with the comprehensive plan of the Village

Recommended Actions:

- a. Compare and coordinate with relevant recommendations in the Village's comprehensive plan.

6. Utilize design solutions that reduce impervious surfaces, bring water and stormwater to public attention, and increase use of native landscaping.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Identify design guidelines for environmentally sustainable development, consistent with the preceding objectives.
 - b. Identify and assess potential design templates (e.g., those developed for the Blackberry Creek demonstration project) for applicability in Homer Glen.
 - c. Conduct workshops and/or field trips for trustees and plan commissioners to evaluate real examples of sustainable designs.
7. Tailor and adopt conservation design templates as official guidelines for new development and redevelopment in Homer Glen.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Village staff and consultants should meet with large landowners of developable land to discuss and promote conservation development design concepts.
 - b. Village staff and consultants should identify and implement, in cooperation with key developers, several large-scale “demonstration” developments that meet conservation design principles.
8. Evaluate and implement options for sustainable wastewater facility planning and treatment that promote reuse, recharge, reduction, and minimization of impacts.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See objective 3 (above) and objective 2 under Natural Resources, Habitat and Wildlife.

9. Protect as key “environmental corridors” flood prone areas, wetlands, surface watercourses and adjacent buffers of native vegetation.

Recommended Actions:

- a. See objectives 2 and 3, above.
 - b. Identify sustainable site design and runoff guidelines based on references such as those in the NIPC publication “Reducing the Impacts of Urban Runoff”.
 - c. Include these guidelines as a reference in the Village’s subdivision and stormwater ordinances.
10. Adopt best management practices for stormwater management to assure that new developments do not contribute runoff that increases off-site flooding or degrade water quality in surface or groundwater systems.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Work with the Illinois State Geological Survey and Water Survey to identify/map aquifer and groundwater recharge features in the Village.
 - b. Identify the long-term capacity of the aquifer system and compare it to projected water supply demand.
 - c. Identify any sensitive recharge zones.
 - d. Develop and implement recommendations/ requirements for new development (e.g., impervious area reduction, stormwater infiltration practices) to protect both the capacity and water quality of existing natural recharge zones.
11. Identify and protect groundwater aquifers and their recharge zones to ensure safe and abundant water supplies for the Village.

Recommended Actions:

- a. Hire a progressive wastewater planning/engineering firm to identify and evaluate sustainable wastewater planning/treatment alternatives, consistent with the preceding water and natural resource objectives.

- b. Develop a community-wide wastewater facility plan that integrates wastewater management with the preceding water resource, habitat, and open space objectives.
- c. Work with neighboring municipalities, wastewater utilities, NIPC, and IEPA to adopt and implement a community-wide wastewater facility plan.



Benchmarks

The Green Vision of the Homer Glen Community includes a series of Benchmarks to enable the Village to measure implementation progress.

Within One Year

- Gain Village Board approval of vision and goals
- Develop implementation plans and oversight responsibility
- Establish GIS database identifying environment features
- Initiate a comprehensive transportation study
- Identify necessary changes to codes and ordinances
- Create a community education and awareness program
- Initiate farmland protection measures

Within Five Years

- Approve at least one conservation design development
- Develop at least five miles of trail system
- Adopt a comprehensive park plan and acquisition program
- Protect 200 additional acres of open space
- Establish demonstration projects for innovative stormwater management
- Produce plans for a town center
- Establish environmental accounting practices (life-cycle analysis for large capital projects)
- Adopt a strategic transportation improvement plan (including alternative transportation options)
- Adopt environmental codes and ordinances
- Implement stormwater (watershed) protection measures
- Incorporate native plants into landscape designs

Within Ten to Twenty Years

- Approve at least 50% of the new plans for development as conservation design
- Develop additional 5 miles of trail system
- Connect local trails to regional trail system
- Protect 500 additional acres of open space
- Acquire land for a town center and begin construction
- Safeguard five active farming sites
- Acquire recreational park land and facilitate its active use
- Link environmental corridors and wildlife habitats forming an Emerald Necklace

