

VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS

GREENEST REGION COMPACT (GRC)

LOG OF OBJECTIVES COMPLETED

January 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025



COLLABORATING FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

~ JANUARY 2025 ~

The Village shared information with the community on holiday tree pick up options that include Waste Management and Public Works. The Public Works option allows for residents to leave their trees curbside on selected dates in January, at which time crews will pick up the trees and create mulch available free of charge for the community, (Waste & Recycling – Waste Diversion – Collaborate to provide recycling services / divert waste from landfills).

Staff provided an update on objectives achieved for the Greenest Region Compact, 2024. This information will be shared with the Village Board and placed on the Sustainability page on the Village website.

Sustainability Planning Guide 2025-26, based on Capital Improvement Program budget. This document provides staff with Board approved objectives and funding to pursue numerous objectives within the 10 categories of the Greenest Region Compact. Objectives include:

- Continue to engage all stakeholders who are committed to sustainability (SWALCO, Waste Management, Vernon Hills-Lincolnshire Go Green, etc.).
- Continue membership with the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO). Extended Producer Responsibility for many products to include packaging, carpet, and other materials continues to be a priority to divert items from landfills. Each of these products costs individuals and communities a significant amount of resources to recover, process and/or dispose of safely. Proposed legislation would require producers to provide resources to SWALCO to support proper disposal, or in the case of paint, require support for handling of excess product and waste, which is now handled through HHCW collection. Support for this legislation is within the scope of the Greenest Region Compact under Leadership (Advocate for State policies that support investment in municipal advances in sustainability).
- Evaluate SWALCO's request for the Village to participate in joint-administered recycling program.
- Improved Permit Process – research paper-reduction permit process for Technical Review. A streamlined process will be introduced that will reduce the amount of paper copies required as well as reduce printing costs for the petitioner.
- Residential (Municipal) Waste Contract. Prepare for negotiations and determine strategy to achieve the next contract from WM, or prepare RFP.
- Single Use Plastics Legislation - Monitor pending legislation that proposes a statewide tax and/or ban on plastic and paper bags.
- Continue to engage retailers to determine if sustainability planning is underway of voluntary steps are being considered.
- Review fleet replacement timeline, vehicle options, and determine if hybrid and/or electric vehicle replacement plan.
- Monitor HHW and HCW disposal options with the closing of the Lincolnshire Household Chemical Waste Collection point, and with the reduced number of SWALCO regional collection events, explore other options. Waste Management has proposed a subscription service that would be funded by residents (as part of the municipal contract) known as “At Your Door.”

- Communicate HHW and HCW disposal options and events to the community.
- Street Light LED conversion program for Village streets. (Energy - Upgrade Streetlight Equipment) \$250,000 for 2025, \$200,000 for years 2026-2029.
- Plan to implement EV charging station on Village property, (Mobility -Collaborate to provide alternative fuel infrastructure at public sites).
- Implementation of the Master Plan for restoration of Harvey Lake, (Land - Manage public areas landscapes to optimize ecosystems and support biodiversity).
- Development of the Village's Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan, (Mobility - Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan to improve connectivity in the community).
- Pedestrian Safety and APA Improvements \$50,000 per year for next five years.
- Bicycle Way Finding Project – Signage to encourage bicycle transportation and connectivity to Village businesses and attractions.
- Seavey Ditch Stream Restoration – Program to reduce sediment leading into Lake Charles. \$1,800,000 budgeted.
- Lake Charles Sediment Removal (mouth of Lake) and Sediment Trap Project (at Gregg’s Parkway) to reduce sediment leading into Lake Charles.
- Lake Charles Shoreline Restoration and WDR Golf Course Channel Restoration Project.
- Lake Charles Dam Restoration \$140,000.
- RT 60 Median Enhancements – Improve aesthetics and replace aged and dying trees. \$75,000 for FY 26/27.
- ADA Transition Plan \$25,000.
- Pedestrian Safety and ADA Improvements \$50,000 per year for the next five years.
- Village Entry Monument replacement plan \$80,000
- Implement organics collection and education opportunities at Vernon Hills Days.

Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus Environmental Committee Meeting - January 21, 2025 – Presentation on conservation efforts of monarch butterflies and the importance of preserving habitat. Content included a briefing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is now proposing Endangered Species Act protection for the monarch butterfly. (Leadership – Engage with non-governmental organizations and municipal associations to align with actions from the GRC).

Zoning Code Amendment related to Electric Vehicles – The Village of Vernon Hills is currently participating in the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Electric Vehicle (EV) Readiness Program. The program guides municipal staff through training exercises intended to improve support for electric vehicle infrastructure, prepare for internal fleet management, enhance/streamline permitting procedures, and educate the public. One of the primary components of the program is to modify the zoning code to reduce barriers to electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS). Draft amendments to the zoning code have been prepared for the Planning and Zoning review and Village Board review /approval.

Staff from the Manager’s Office and Public Works met with members of Go Green (January 30) to discuss the waste contract and goal setting in the development of the Village’s Sustainability Plan.

~ FEBRUARY 2025 ~

As Earth Day approaches, SWALCO and Vernon Hills Public Works are coordinating a Reuse-a-Shoe event and considering partnering for International Compost Awareness Week.

The Village is partnering with SWALCO to utilize Recycle Coach (a user-friendly mobile application) that promotes recycling and provides educational material and content to increase recycling and organics collection to divert waste from landfills. Village staff continues to work with Recycle Coach to provide information on the Village waste hauler contract and services offered, and has added widgets and links to the Village website making this application available to residents (Waste & Recycling – Promote waste and recycling in municipal operations).

Residential Waste Contract Options – A resident requested staff research “Pay as you Throw” programs as an alternative to the current type of contract. “Pay as you Throw” is a concept that drives residents to divert waste from landfills by being aware of their usage (pay per bag or container), and to reduce need for stickers, focus on recycling, composting, and organics collection. Within Lake County, only Highland Park has this type of service. Other municipalities have experimented with this type of program and have since opted out (e.g. Batavia). WM was contacted and indicated they would not bid on this type of program, as there is not consistency in capturing fees / revenue for services and there is evidence waste is not reduced but placed into recycling containers and/or taken to alternative locations for disposal. Without Waste Management, having interest in this program only one to two other vendors would be available for RFP. There is also an inconvenience factor to consider as a sticker / bag program would be needed.

Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus Environmental Committee Meeting - February 18, 2025 – Light pollution from artificial light is reported to cause health problems and excessive lighting waste energy and contributes to climate change. A presentation provides steps for municipalities to include transitioning to LED, use of motion sensor, and targeted lighting, (Leadership – Engage with governmental, non-governmental organizations, and municipal associations to align with actions from the GRC).

~ MARCH 2025 ~

The majority of this March has been dedicated to negotiating a contract extension with Waste Management. Community input has included a request for year-round organics collection, along with organics collection to be conducted at large community events. The Village has also discussed implementing an organics drops off location to provide participation opportunity for persons who are focused on sustainability but cannot afford curbside services. Staff has reviewed the terms of the extension proposal with the Board along with the additional services. A decision will be made in the next 30 days.

~ APRIL 2025 ~

Electric charging station implementation is complete. Stations will allow Village fleet vehicles to be charged and permit for resident use as well. Four stations are now available at 290 Evergreen Drive.

The Village took possession of its first electric vehicle. A Chevy utility EV has been assigned to the Community Development Department.

Village staff attended the SWALCO Board of Director's Meeting on April 10, 2025.

Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Environmental Committee Meeting - April 15, 2025. Code Enforcement and Adoption for Sustainability; implementing municipal code that that supports emerging technologies such as EV and clean energy technology, (Leadership – Engage with non-governmental organizations and municipal associations to align with actions from the GRC).

Promotion of International Compost Awareness Week – The Village is promoting on all platforms information on ICAW to include the Compost Giveback on Sunday May 4. This program is in partnership with SWALCO and the Vernon Hills Park District.

The Village and Public Works provided programming related to sustainability to the Vernon Hills Seniors Organization (April 23). This programming included a presentation by Waste Management on sustainability initiatives to include a Village designated drop off for organics collection' a presentation by Go Green Vernon Hills Lincolnshire on the importance of waste diversion; and a native plant give-a-way and tree planting sponsored by Waste Management.

April 25, 2025 - Arbor Day activities – The Village of Vernon Hills has been awarded Tree City status for the 33rd year. To be eligible for this recognition, a Village must have a forestry department and designate financial resources to forestry. The Village manages over 12,000 trees and is planning to plant an additional 110 trees during 2025. The Village typically spends over \$200,000 per year on forestry initiatives and will be conducting an event with a local Boy Scout Troop at the Arboretheater.

~ MAY 2025 ~

Municipal Waste Contract approved. Additional services will include designated organics collection site within the Village that will be made available free to all residents. Year-round organics collection services will also be made available (subscription based), with this service being offered in multi-family and HOA.

~ JUNE 2025 ~

The Village of Vernon Hills has been recognized by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus for achieving the EV Ready Community Bronze designation!

This distinction demonstrates the work and commitment to EV Readiness, making it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to install EV charging stations and transition to clean electric transportation. This achievement is will formally be recognized on **Monday, August 4, from approximately 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago.**

The Village continues to partner with members of Go Green Vernon Hills – Lincolnshire to implement food scrap and organics collection at Vernon Hills Days. This effort requires the collaboration of the Village, Waste Management, and community. Special thanks to the Vernon Hills Days Committee for the support!

On June 17, staff participated in the Environment Committee Meeting covering the Chicago Metro Recycling Education and Outreach Campaign. As a member of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, there is an effort to collaborate on Recycling Education and Outreach (REO) with a campaign featuring two key goals:

- Get residents of the Metro region excited about recycling again!
- Educate residents to increase recycling and reduce contamination at the community level

The Village is participating by placing prepared content on Village Communications platforms.

Village Communications promoted SWALCO Household Waste Chemical Waste (HCW) collection events. Upcoming mobile events promoted, as well as drop-off at the permanent collection site, (Waste & Recycling - Collaborate to support proper disposal of household hazardous waste).

~ JULY 2025 ~

The Village and members of Go Green Vernon Hills – Lincolnshire are partnering to create awareness of the need to divert food waste from landfills. Volunteers will be at Vernon Hills Days and working with Public Works and Waste Management to implement organics collection. Volunteers will be given opportunity to help create awareness and educate attendees ton this topic, (Sustainable Communities – Encourage the community to participate in sustainability initiatives).

The Communications Team will be placing content on Village platforms regarding organics collection at community events, in effort to educate and promote zero waste initiatives to include diverting food waste from landfills, (Sustainable Communities – Education – Educate the community about sustainability initiatives using municipal communications outlets).

The Village, through a survey initiated by Public Works is seeking resident input to better understand preferences and recommendations for improving Harvey Lake and the surrounding area. This is in effort to maximize the amount of public spaces and parks accessible to residents, (Land – Parks and Open Space - Develop a park and open space master plan).

~ AUGUST 2025 ~

The Village was recognized by the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus and received Bronze designation for being an EV Ready Community. The Village was supported by Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire, which suggested the Village begin some of its vehicles to electric and install a charging station that residents can use. The Village also made changes to policy that will allow EV charging stations in parking lots without any special approval and streamlines the permitting process specific to charging stations.

At the request of SWALCO, the Village Communications Team shared information on an upcoming Household Chemical Waste collection event scheduled for Saturday, September 20, 2025 in Lake Forest, (Sustainable Communities – Education – Educate the community about sustainability initiatives using municipal communications outlets).

Information on a workshop pertaining to pollinators and urban farming scheduled for Saturday, August 23, 2025 at Mellody Farm was shared by Village communications, (Sustainable Communities – Education – Educate the community about sustainability initiatives using municipal communications outlets).

On August 26, 2025, Public Works conducted an Open House, which featured many of the stakeholders who contribute toward sustainability. Featured was SWALCO, who presented information the success of Vernon Hills diversion efforts. Notes include over 50,000 pounds of clothing and textiles being diverted from landfills and over 40,000 pounds of shoes being diverted from landfills. Education on diversion programs and the positive impacts for landfills and the environment were shared at this event, (Waste & Recycling – Divert Waste from Landfills – Collaborate to provide recycling services for items not suitable for curbside pick-up).

~ SEPTEMBER 2025 ~

The Village was recognized by SWALCO for being one of the top 12 collection sites in Lake County for 2024 for clothing and textile collection. Sites include a variety of sites including public property (Public Works) as well as private property sites (Hawthorn, etc.).

Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Environmental Committee Meeting - September 16, 2025. Members will meet to learn about and discuss impacts of data centers on municipalities and communities. Data centers are the unseen backbone of the digital economy, yet their development and operations impact local governments and residents both positively and negatively. As data center facilities can provide significant benefits for communities, including tax revenue, enhanced digital connectivity and new jobs, they demand enormous amounts of energy and water and their operation can impact neighbors and community resilience. (Leadership – Engage with governmental, non-governmental organizations, and municipal associations to align with actions from the GRC)

On Friday, September 26, Hawthorn Mall and the Morton Arboretum are partnering to help “green” the Hawthorn campus. The Village is helping to promote participating by placing content on Village communications platforms and will have staff onsite to participate in tree

plantings. Trees are provided by Morton Arboretum, (Land - Plant Trees to sustain and renew the urban forest / maintain beautiful landscapes and streetscape to enhance business districts).

On September 29, 2025, staff from the Manager's Office met with a Go Green Vernon Hills – Lincolnshire community member to discuss recent sustainability initiatives, progress with initiatives identified in the Village sustainability planning guide and prioritization & goal setting). Staff has shared intent to place a line item in the FY 25/26 budget for a Sustainability Consultant to develop a formal Village Sustainability Plan.

~ OCTOBER 2025 ~

Vernon Hills Public Works Department participated with SWALCO and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency by depositing 35 used tires at a tire collection event. This event was conducted on Monday, October 6, 2025 at the LCDOT Winchester Facility in Libertyville and intended to reduce environmental pollution and minimize public health risks.

Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Environmental Committee Meeting - October 21, 2025. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMPA) is partnering with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to create the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for greater Chicago. CMAP has been working with experts and stakeholder to create a draft plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from major sources and achieve the goal for net zero emission by 2050. This meeting includes reps from 13 counties and three states in the greater Chicago area and is intended to allow input and provide an understanding of this initiative. (Leadership – Engage with non-governmental organizations and municipal associations to align with actions from the GRC).

The Village is collaborating with SWALCO and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to promote the "Feed the Cart" campaign. This campaign has goals to educate residents on what is and what is not recyclable and to increase the amount of material collected for recycling. Branding and content will be placed on Village communications platforms, (Waste & Recycling – Waste Diversion – Collaborate to provide recycling services / divert waste from landfills).

~ NOVEMBER 2025 ~

Harvey Lake Master Plan – During the November 18th Board Meeting, a concept preservation for the natural space around Harvey Lake was presented to the Village Board. Proposals include ensuring preservation, improving water quality, reducing invasive vegetation, and increasing accessibility.

~ ONGOING OBJECTIVES & PROJECTS ~

- Provide curbside recycling, (Waste and Recycling).
- Collaborate to provide recycling services for items not suitable for curbside recycling include Re-Use a Shoe, Holiday Tree Pick up, Household Chemical Waste collection days, (Waste and Recycling).
- Provide Electronic Waste Collection Point, (Waste and Recycling).

- Support proper disposal of medical waste, (Waste and Recycling).
- Support pharmaceutical waste collection, (Waste and Recycling).
- Share the delivery of public services with other local governments. Village achievements include consolidated dispatch, fleet maintenance performed by PW for CFD, and snow plow operations between VHPD and Vernon Township, partnership with the Park District for VHAC and major summer events to include Vernon Hills Days and RibFest, (Municipal Operations – Consolidation).
- Planting of new trees throughout the Village (Land – Plant trees to sustain and renew the urban forest).
- Vernon Hills Emergency Communications – VHPD / CFPD; (Municipal Operations – Consolidate and/or share the delivery of public services with other local governments).
- Vernon Hills Public Works Fleet Maintenance – support for CFPD; (Municipal Operations – Consolidate and/or share the delivery of public services with other local governments).
- Utilization of Vernon Hills Public Works for fuel by area public sector entities; (Municipal Operations – Consolidate and/or share the delivery of public services with other local governments).
- Energy efficiency measures - e.g. occupancy sensors; (Energy – Implement energy efficiency measures that have a short-term payback).
- Regulate burning of landscape waste. Prohibition of open burning via Ordinance 9-12; (Climate – Maintain Clean and healthy air).
- Prioritize the acquisition, dedication and management of lands to create connected greenways – Conversion of Nike site to Vernon Hills Athletic Complex, (Land Conserve, Restore, and enhance natural features).
- Conserve key natural assets – Protection of conservancy areas @ Port Clinton Road and RT 83, (Land – Land Preservation – Conserve, Restore, and enhance natural features).
- Maintain beautiful landscapes and streetscapes to enhance gateways, business districts and important public spaces – Conducted Village-wide, (Land – Landscapes – Sustain beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services).
- Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan to improve connectivity in the community and beyond, (Mobility – Support safe and active transportation – see Comprehensive Plan – Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan).
- Provide bicycle parking at municipal facilities such as transit stations, (Mobility - Support safe and active transportation – installation of bicycle rack at Metra).
- Landscaping and tree planting on roadway infrastructure and islands, (Mobility – Incorporate trees and green infrastructure elements into roadway design).
- Silo preservation at Aspen Point, (Sustainable Communities - Preserve and maintain the community’s historic assets).
- Cuneo Mansion / Estates Agreement Sustainable Communities - Preserve and maintain the community’s historic assets).
- Village Community Development Department, Centennial Real Estate, and planners dedicated to creating a ‘walkable-community’ in the redevelopment of H20. This includes Phase I (former Sears parcel), and Phase II (former Carson Pirie Scott parcel), (Land – Encourage development of compact and complete residential neighborhoods).