

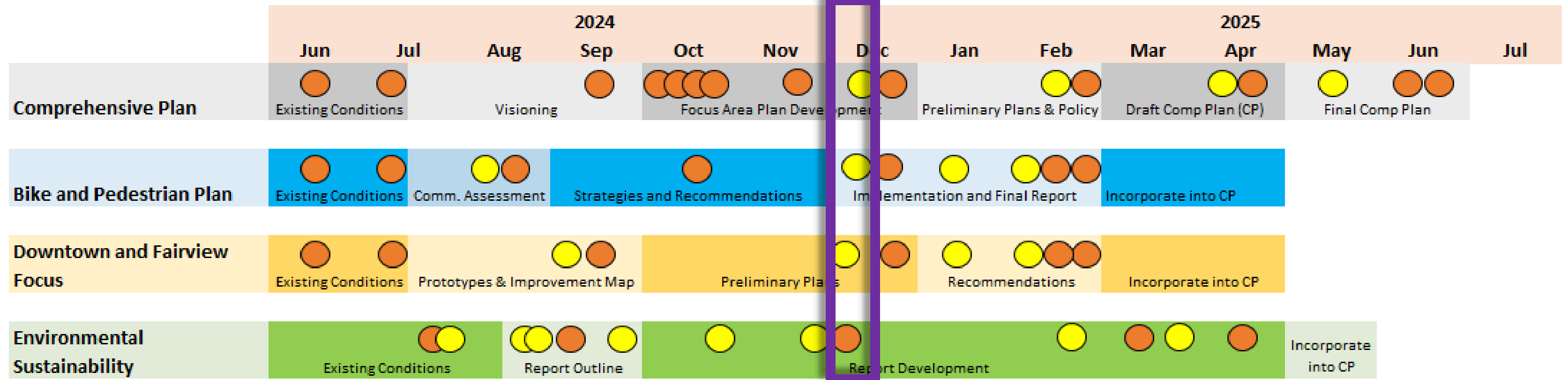


GUIDING DG SUSTAINABILITY

Dec. 3, 2024

DRAFT INTRO & VISION SECTIONS

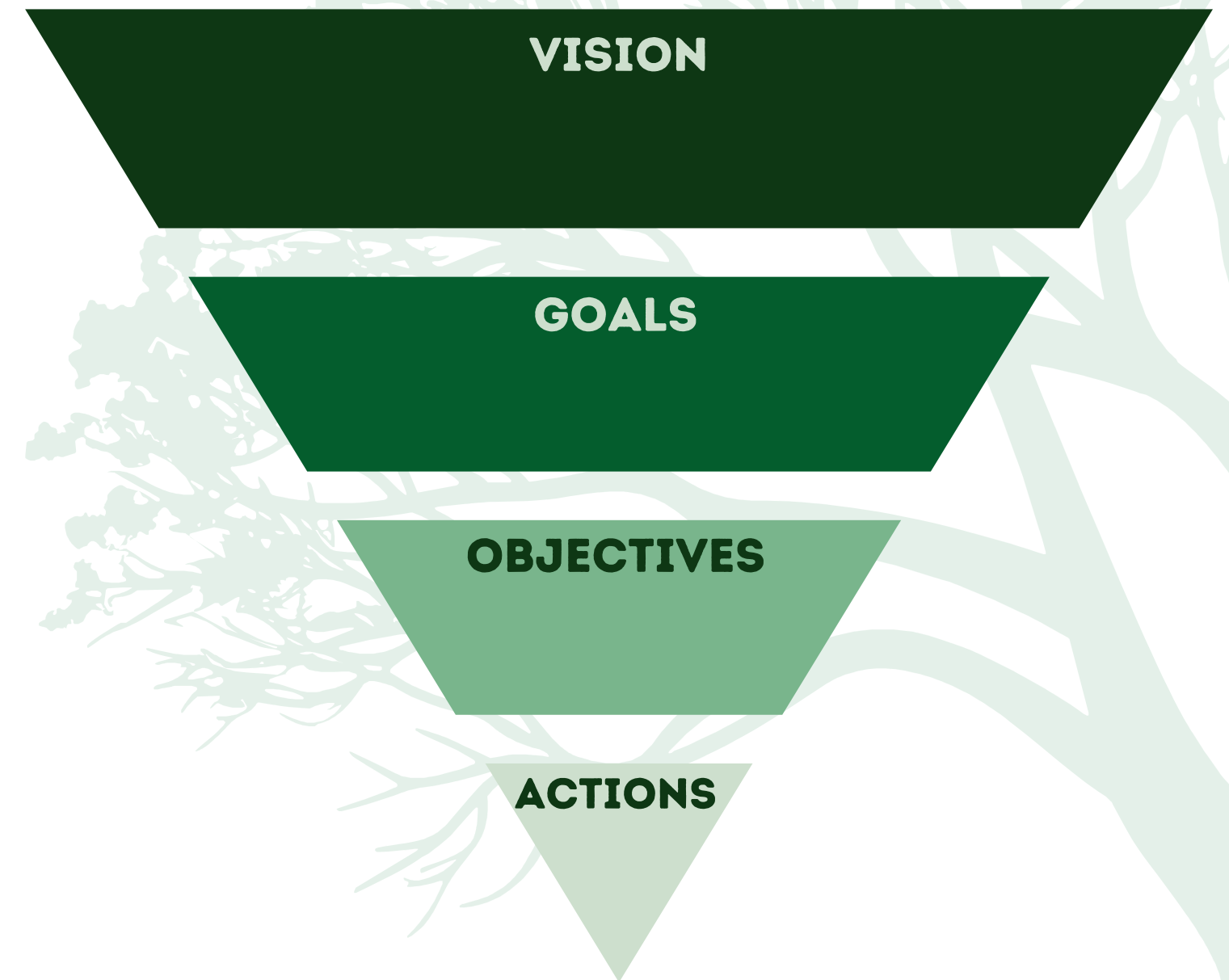
PROJECT TIMELINE



- Village Council Meeting
- Board and Commission Meeting

ESP OUTLINE

1. Cover Pages
2. Executive Summary
3. Introduction
4. Vision
5. Framework/Decision-making Resource(s)
6. Village Objectives
7. Community Pledge
8. Conclusion
9. Appendix: Action Plan for Village





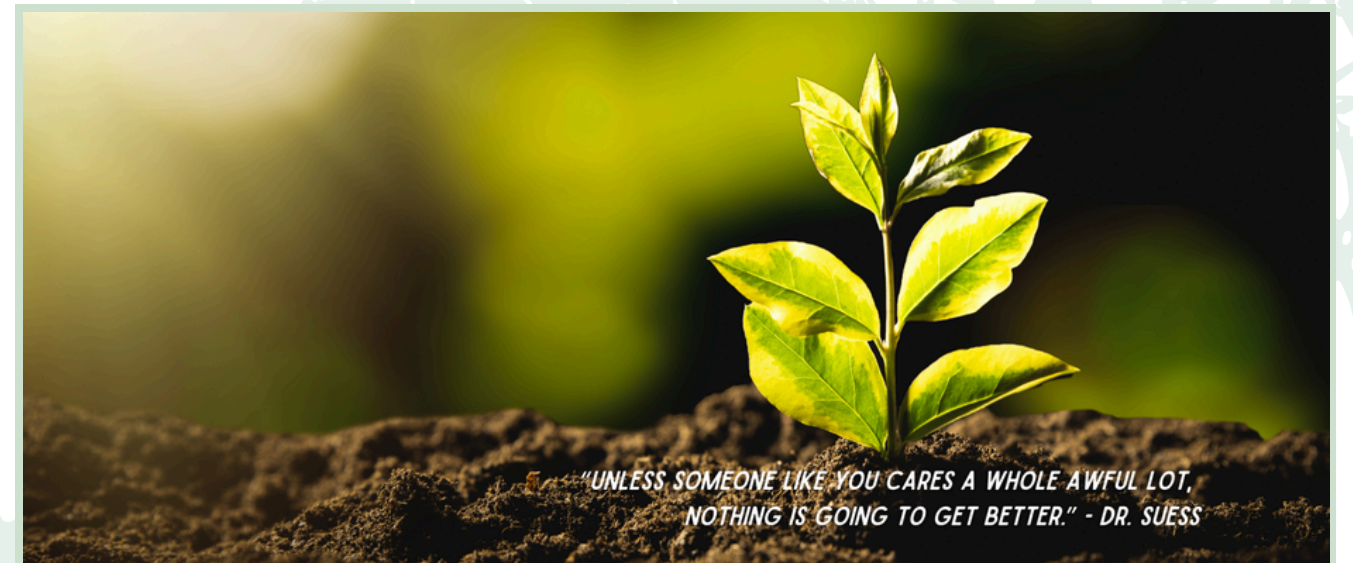
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VILLAGE COUNCIL FEEDBACK

INTRO SECTION

- **A Greener Future**
 - Establish purpose
 - Set intent
 - Call to action
- **Background**
 - Summary of Downers Grove's history of conservation and sustainability
- **Foot Notes → Side Bar**
 - Core of ESP for general audience
 - Additional information and more technical facts if reader opts to



A GREENER FUTURE

Downers Grove is one of 284 municipalities that make up the Chicago metropolitan region. It is both centrally located and well connected to the rest of the region, making it a desirable place to call home and do business. As one of Chicago's larger suburbs, Downers Grove is home to more than 50,000 residents and a place where more than 50,000 individuals work. In all the ways that Downers Grove contributes to the economic vitality and cultural vibrancy of the region, it also contributes to a local, regional, and global environmental burden (1).

In 2023, the Village of Downers Grove committed to do more to reduce its environmental footprint by joining the Greenest Region compact, a sustainability initiative that seeks to coordinate environmental efforts in the Chicago region. The creation of the Village's first Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP) is a step towards embracing the benefits of nature, seeking ways to be a more sustainable community, and enhancing the character of the community through actions that provide long-term value to those who live and work here.

Achieving the goals laid out in this plan will not happen all at once. Instead, this plan sets a course and serves as a guide for investing the community's human, natural, social, political, and economic capital. It establishes an aspirational vision with goals and objectives to guide

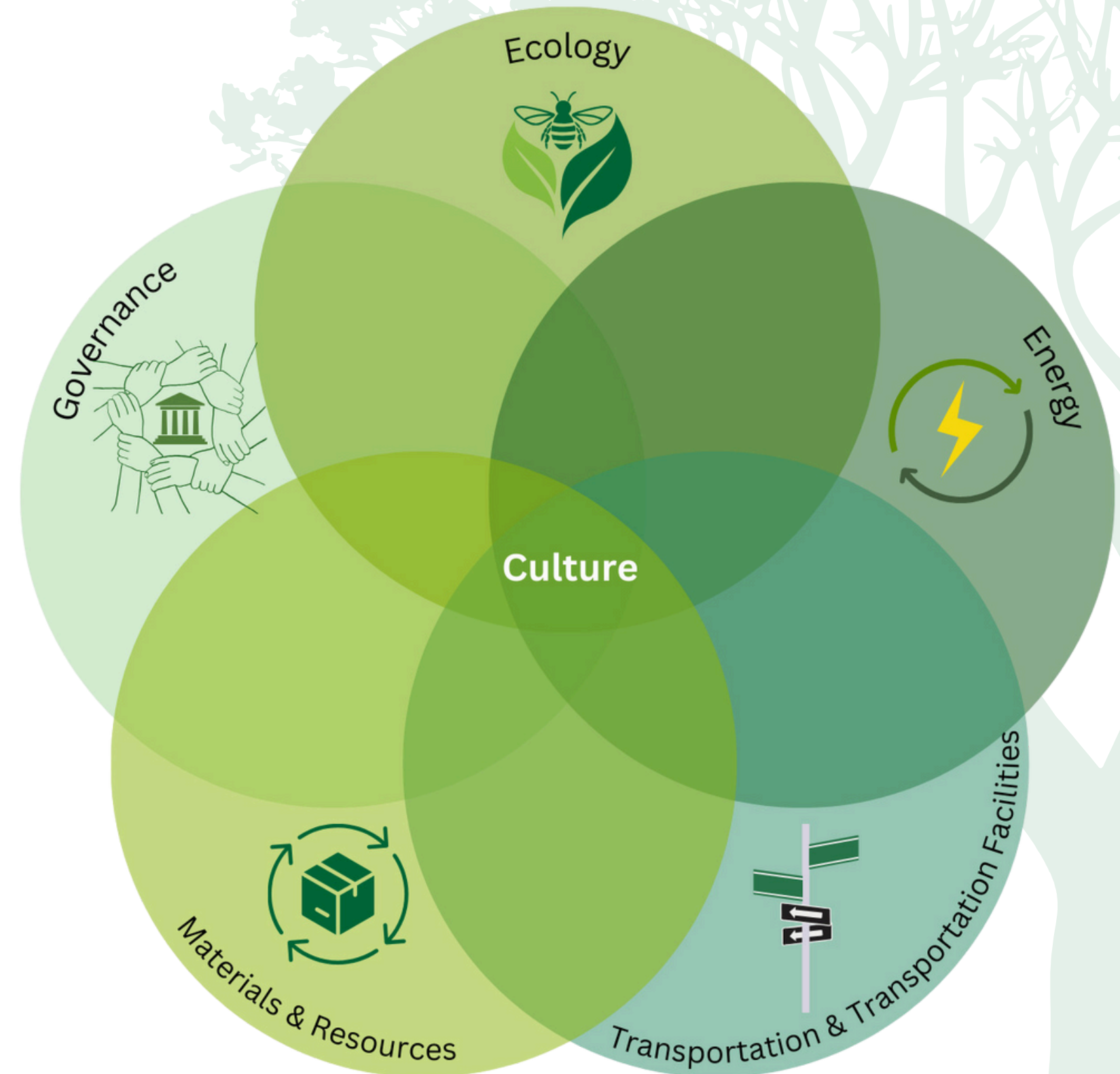
KEY FACTS

1. Urban regions are responsible for 80% of global GDP and 85% of global GHG emissions. Suburban communities are responsible for about 50% of emissions in the US, largely due to car dependent development patterns and higher square footage residential dwellings that consume more energy.
2. The Greenest Region Compact has established a collective goal to reduce regional GHG emissions 50% from a 2005 baseline by 2030 and 80% by 2050 in the 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region.

VISION SECTION

- An overall vision statement for sustainability
- Organized around five themes
 - What are the issues? (background)
 - Aspirational statement (vision)
 - Community Goals
 - Limit to 5
 - Provide breadth for objectives
 - Don't specify how
 - Village Key Recommendations
 - Support goals
 - Demonstrate leadership

**ECC
FEEDBACK**





OVERALL VISION STATEMENT

Through a **collective effort** between the Village, other governmental partners, and the community, Downers Grove will become a **model sustainable suburban community**. While many of the **defining characteristics of Downers Grove will remain**, the community will find innovative ways to **reduce its impact on the environment and promote equitable benefits** through **effective communication and collaboration, thoughtful planning and investment**, and **shared values** for the natural world.



ENERGY

Diligent planning and investment will help **preserve houses and buildings while significantly improving energy efficiency** and reducing building-related emissions. Redevelopment and new construction will meet or exceed current building and energy conservation codes in a way that **minimizes future greenhouse gas emissions**. Downers Grove will also be a regional leader in the amount of **renewable energy that is generated and stored locally**. Property owners who are not able to meet their renewable energy goals directly on-site will have multiple options to **purchase renewable electricity**.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:

emissions, historic preservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy



ENERGY

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Work towards becoming a **carbon-neutral community**
- Reduce building-related energy use through **energy-efficiency retrofits and upgrades**
- Find innovative ways to partner with other organizations to **decarbonize energy sources** while maintaining a robust and resilient grid
- Expand options for residents and businesses in Downers Grove to **purchase renewable electricity**

VILLAGE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strive to become a **carbon-neutral organization** by 2035 and **carbon-negative** by 2045
- **Purchase 100% renewable energy** for Village-owned facilities while working towards **self-generating renewable energy**
- Determine the most appropriate way to **implement energy conservation and energy efficiency retrofits**



ECOLOGY

Every home, business, and institution within Downers Grove will find a way to **give back to nature rather than take more from it.** Holistic efforts by the community will result in **diverse habitats that are connected, clean air and water, and more biodiversity.** The result will be a **healthier and more resilient** environment for all living creatures that also **contribute to the charm of Downers Grove's neighborhoods and public spaces.**

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:

biodiversity, habitat connectivity, clean air and water



ECOLOGY

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Increase **biodiversity and habitat connectivity** throughout Downers Grove
- Maintain a **healthy urban forest**
- Improve **water quality** in local waterways
- Support the conservation of **potable water**
- Reduce **light pollution**

VILLAGE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Actively **improve biodiversity and habitat restoration** on Village properties and through partnerships with other local government entities
- Explore becoming a **Dark Sky Community**
- Prioritize **nature-based solutions** to reduce risks associated with climate change and improve the quality of water in waterways
- Continue and expand the use of public spaces as **native landscaping demonstration gardens**
- **Avoid the use of chemicals** that harm plants and impact water quality
- Continue to **maintain the lowest possible leakage** throughout the Village's water system



MATERIALS & RESOURCES

There will be **widespread awareness** about the impacts of daily choices, especially around how **different goods and services impact the environment**. Thoughtful purchasing choices will result in a **greater preference for supporting local businesses and regionally produced goods**. Greater awareness of waste will also result in more being **diverted from landfills** than ends up in them.

Businesses and institutions will be leaders in **green procurement** and collaborate to find efficiencies and reduce the community's overall **resource consumption**. These conscious choices will drive a **vibrant green economy** that attracts businesses looking to be a part of a sustainable community.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:

conscious consumerism, product lifecycle, and waste reduction



MATERIALS & RESOURCES

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Promote **awareness about the environmental impact** of the different goods and services, as well as **sustainable alternatives**
- Find solutions to reduce the amount of waste while **improving recycling and composting** throughout the community
- Promote the **availability** of locally and regionally produced goods and services

VILLAGE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider enhancing **green procurement practices** that prioritize sustainable goods and services
- Maximize the **longevity of infrastructure and facilities** to reduce the overall use of materials and resources in Village operations
- Seek ways to repurpose, recycle, or use resources to their **highest potential** when they reach the **end of their useful life**
- Encourage economic development strategies that **support green businesses and a circular economy**



TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

By utilizing right-of-ways, Downers Grove's streets will effectively move people throughout the community and be viewed as **natural corridors**. A **healthy urban forest** that is supplemented by beneficial native plantings will improve **ecological connectivity** and enhance the character of streetscapes. A **well-connected network of bike and pedestrian facilities** will allow people to move throughout the community without personal vehicles. **Infrastructure that supports emerging alternatives** to reduce tailpipe emissions will be available throughout the community, maintaining Downers Grove's regional connectivity by vehicle. **Parking lots** will also become opportunities to meet the community's energy goals, while strategically located public lots will continue to be utilized as programmable spaces.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:

habitat connectivity, tailpipe emissions, and parking land uses



TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Seek ways to **further transform parkways into natural corridors**
- Promote strategies that **reduce vehicle-related emissions**
- Minimize **urban heat islands**
- Reduce **impervious surfaces** related to transportation facilities

VILLAGE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop strategies that utilize Village rights-of-way as a means of **meeting carbon-neutrality and habitat connectivity goals**
- Consider the **installation of solar canopies** in public parking lots and promote the installation of solar canopies in privately owned lots
- Promote the development of **charging infrastructure** throughout Downers Grove
- Seek to reduce the environmental **impact of parking lots** through stormwater and zoning regulations



GOVERNANCE

A **collective pledge** to be more sustainable as a community will result in an active effort to **coordinate across local governments and community groups** to find efficient and effective means of delivering high-quality public services in the least impactful way. The Village will seek to **implement forward-thinking policies and innovative service delivery** with a goal of empowering the community to achieve its sustainability goals. The Village will also be an **active leader** in regional efforts to share best practices and champion collective action to protect natural resources and reduce the region's environmental impact.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:
culture, collaboration, and policy



GOVERNANCE

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Inspire a **culture of environmental stewardship and thoughtfulness** about the natural world as a cornerstone of the community
- Collaborate with community organizations and other local government partners to **ensure that residents and businesses are well-informed** about the ways they can support community-wide and Village sustainability goals
- Support resident coordination, especially within neighborhoods, to promote **neighborhood sustainability practices and projects**

VILLAGE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore **policies to promote sustainable action** in the community
- Continue to invest in projects and ongoing Village services that **increase natural habitat, enhance community resilience, and reduce emissions**
- **Collaborate with other governmental entities** to achieve community and regional sustainability goals
- **Promote awareness** of the Village's efforts and progress on achieving sustainability-related goals