



# **PARKWAY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE**

**Proposed Amendment to Chapter 22: Streets and Sidewalks**

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**Office of Sustainability and Resilience**

**March 11, 2025**

# Overview



***The proposed Ordinance would accomplish the following:***

- **States the Village's intention to promote the use of public parkways to increase native gardens and support CROP plan goals around biodiversity and green infrastructure.**
- **Clarifies maintenance responsibilities of the Village Forester and establishes maintenance responsibilities for adjacent property owners in regards to parkways.**
- **Establishes a definition and guidelines to allow cultivated and native gardens within the Village parkways.**

# Background



**Board Goal 5.1.h: Advance Village policies and programs to support the transition of the Village's and community's land to green infrastructure.**

**CROP Commitment: Establish 30% of Oak Park's land as green infrastructure or enhanced park management.**

**CROP Plan Goal: Prioritize Native Species over Non-Native Species**

**Action NN01: Adopt an ordinance allowing residents to garden on the parkways they maintain with sustainable and native plantings and review the Village code for any conflicts with sustainable lawn or native species maintenance practices.**

# Background - Outreach Timeline



- **Starting in 2022** – engagement with specific community groups including the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus and West Cook Wild Ones
- **July 13 – September 19, 2023:** Engage Oak Park collected 314 survey responses from the community at large.
- **August – November 2023:** Reviewed ordinance with the Disability Access Commission (DAC) and Environment and Energy Commission (EEC).
- **August – December 2024:** Review with internal Village staff stakeholders.
- **February 2025:** Discussed language and outreach plan with West Cook Wild Ones.
- **March 4, 2025:** The EEC voted to recommend to approve the draft ordinance presented here, without modifications.

# Proposed Ordinance Text

## Amendment



### 22-16-1: DEFINITIONS

**CULTIVATED GARDEN:** A cultivated garden is a combination of a garden from which weeds have been removed and the soil has been loosened to improve the retention and penetration of air, water, and nutrients.

**NATIVE GARDEN:** A native garden is a cultivated garden containing a minimum of seventy percent (70%) plants which are native to northern Illinois or which provide nourishment or habitat for native or migratory pollinators during any stage of their lifecycle, or both.

**PARKWAY:** The portion of VILLAGE OWNED PROPERTY generally described as the public property between the public sidewalk and the street curb.

**TREES AND SHRUBS:** All woody vegetation with a height in excess of 30” at maturity.

**WEEDS:** Grasses, annual plants, and vegetation, other than trees or shrubs, with plant growth in excess of eight (8) inches in height with the exclusion of cultivated gardens.

# Proposed New Section 22-16-2



## **22-16-2 PERSONS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN PARKWAY FRONTING OR ABUTTING PARCELS OR LOTS OWNED, OCCUPIED, LEASED OR OTHERWISE CONTROLLED BY THEM WITHIN THE VILLAGE:**

- A. The maintenance of trees and shrubs in the parkway is the **responsibility of the Forester** as set forth in chapter 25 of this code.
- B. The owner, occupant, lessee or person otherwise legally in possession and control of any lot or parcel in the Village is responsible for the condition of the parkway fronting, abutting, or adjacent to any such lot or parcel, per **IPMC General Requirements, Section 302 (Exterior Property Areas) 302.4 Weeds/Plants**, except for the installation of a **cultivated or native garden, for which no permit is required**.
- C. All plants within the cultivated and native gardens in the parkway shall be maintained in a manner consistent with their habit, but **in no case shall plants exceed 36" in height** outside of clear sight areas at Street Intersections, as set forth in section 25-1-8, or otherwise by reason of location or condition constitute an imminent danger to the health, safety or welfare of the general public.
- D. Cultivated and native gardens in the parkway shall not be placed within four (4) feet of a fire hydrant.
- E. **Between March 1 and October 31 containers smaller than thirty (30) gallons may be placed in the parkway** as a feature of a cultivated or native garden so long as their placement by reason of location or condition does not constitute an imminent danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public.
- F. **The Village shall not be responsible** for compensating, financial or otherwise, persons for gardens, containers, fences, or structures in the parkway if their disturbance is a result of Village work on Village owned property.



# Outreach and Education



## **Educational content focusing on supporting native gardens.**

- **Practical guidance and clarification on Code requirements.**
- **Garden design guidance.**
- **Plant lists:**
  - **Exotic and invasive species to avoid.**
  - **Native species appropriate for parkway native gardens.**
  - **Resources to identify and purchase native plants.**
- **Mayor's Monarch Challenge.**

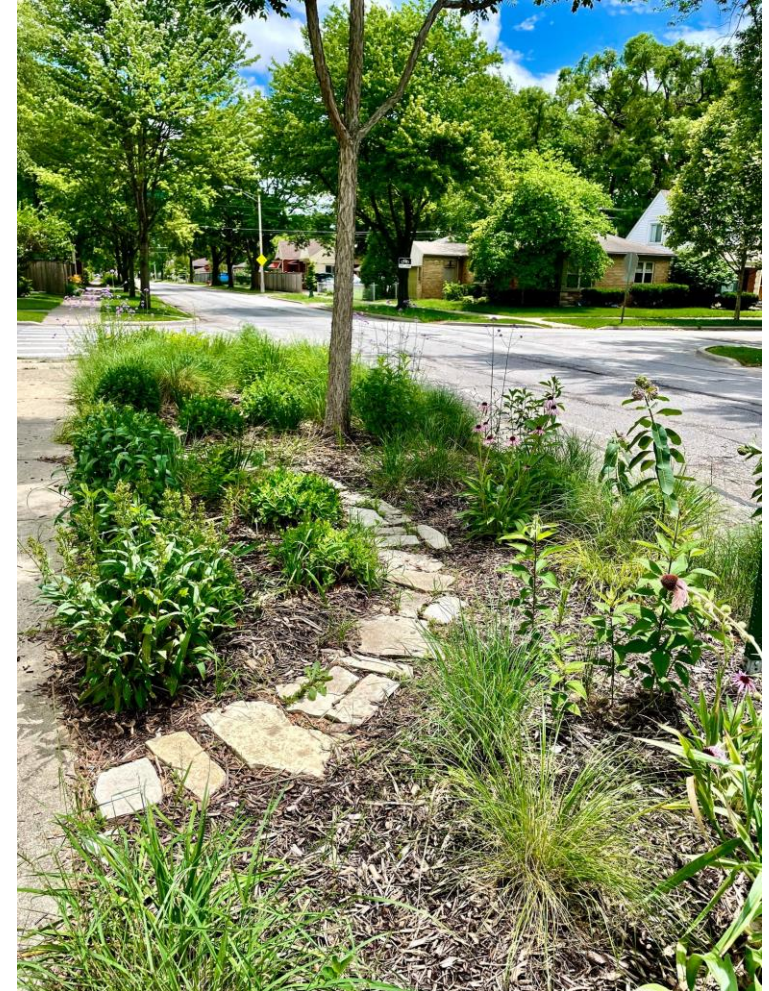


Photo courtesy of West Cook Wild Ones

# Outreach and Education



- **West Cook Wild Ones Partnership**
  - **Design, Planting and Maintenance Workshop.**
  - **Spring Plant Sale promotion.**



A poster for a native gardening workshop. The top half features a photograph of a lush garden bed with various plants. Below the photo is a green banner with a white 'REGISTER NOW!' button and a QR code. The main title 'NATIVE GARDENING FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD:' is in large, bold, green letters, followed by the subtitle 'Design, Planting and Maintenance' in a smaller font. Below this, a paragraph describes the workshop's goal: 'Learn how to plant and design a native garden in your front yard or parkway that pleases the eye and earth.' The date and time are listed as 'MARCH 16, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 pm'. The location is 'MAIN LIBRARY OR VIRTUAL 834 Lake St, Veteran's Room'. A circular inset photo shows two people, Christine Nye and Ken Williams, smiling. At the bottom, the speakers are listed: 'Speakers: Christine Nye and Ken Williams Q&A with Speakers and Village Forester'. The footer contains logos for Oak Park, Wild Ones West Cook, and Oak Park Public Library.

**REGISTER NOW!**

## NATIVE GARDENING FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

Design, Planting and Maintenance

Learn how to plant and design a native garden in your front yard or parkway that pleases the eye and earth.

**MARCH 16, 2025**  
1:00 - 3:00 pm

**MAIN LIBRARY OR VIRTUAL**  
834 Lake St, Veteran's Room

**Speakers:** Christine Nye and Ken Williams  
Q&A with Speakers and Village Forester

**Oak Park**  
West Cook

**WILD ONES**  
West Cook

**OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY**





**Questions?**