



Oak Park Biodiversity + Green Infrastructure Plan

Board of Trustees – February 17 2026

Project Background + Overview

Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) identified a goal to establish **30%** of Oak Park's land Village-wide as **green infrastructure** or **enhanced management** for native plants, wildlife, and people by 2030.

- The Oak Park Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Plan will:
 - Define green infrastructure and enhanced management.
 - Establish a methodology for measurement.
 - Lay the groundwork for action towards CROP's 30% goal with concrete strategies and steps.

Three Project Phases

Phase 1: EPM & GI Definitions + Initial Engagement

Define green infrastructure and enhanced management

This presentation
is a report out of
this phase

Phase 2: Existing Conditions + Areas of Opportunity

Establish methodology for measurement. Measure baseline and identify opportunities.

Phase 3: Plan Development

Lay the groundwork for action towards the goal with concrete strategies and steps.

Timeline

	NOV 2025	DEC 2025	JAN 2026	FEB 2026	MAR 2026	APR 2026	MAY 2026	JUN 2026	JUL 2026
Define GI + EPM	We are here!								
Existing Conditions and Areas of Opportunity Analysis									
Plan Development									
Community Engagement									

A Closer Look: Community Engagement

December 2025:

Focus Group A: Conservation + Biodiversity Organizations

Stakeholder Interviews (Public Works, Neighborhood & Development Services, the Park District, Oak Park Public Library, and School Districts 2000 & 97)

Pop-Up at Winterfest & Cookie Walk Event

Input to shape definitional and measurement framework and understand how Oak Parkers currently experience nature

February 2026:

Focus Group A: Conservation + Biodiversity Organizations (reconvening)

Focus Group B: Youth/Students

Focus Group C: Property Owners

We are here!

Share definitions + baseline analysis findings

Brainstorm potential strategies & opportunities to advance towards goal

March / April 2026:

1 Open House

2 Pop-Up Events

Community-Wide Survey

Prioritize strategies and opportunity scenarios

June 2026:

Open House / Pop-Up at Day in Our Village

Celebration + awareness

Biodiversity is defined as...

the diversity of life in Oak Park

- Species
- Populations
- Habitats
- Ecosystems



Biodiversity is measured by...

Goal	Objective	Indicator	Baseline Data
30% of natural areas are highly diverse, connected, and accessible	Increase diversity of species present	Number of different species within the tree inventory and community biodiversity inventories	Oak Park Tree Inventory Oak Park Biodiversity Survey iNaturalist Records
	Improve connectivity of natural landscapes	Spatial distribution of natural landscapes geographically	GIS Analysis
	Ensure ecosystems are healthy and functioning	Trends in air quality and urban heat recordings (ecosystem functioning)	CROP Existing Conditions and Vulnerability Assessment
	Ensure equitable access to natural areas for all Oak Parkers	Spatial distribution of natural landscape in relation to social vulnerability indicators.	CROP Existing Conditions and Vulnerability Assessment

Green Infrastructure is defined as...

surface areas of open spaces designed to mimic ecological functions that support biodiversity, mitigate stormwater runoff, and improve air and water quality



Green Infrastructure looks like...



Permeable Pavement (like green alleys)



Natural planted areas (including parkways with native landscaping, road medians and pollinator gardens)



Vegetated stormwater management infrastructure (like rain gardens, bioswales)



Green roofs



Community vegetable gardens



Trees

Green Infrastructure is measured by...

Goal	Objective	Indicator(s)	Baseline Data
30% of Oak Park land area is occupied by (non-tree canopy) green infrastructure	Increase GI on private properties	Land area occupied by private community gardens	Cook County 2025 Aerial Imagery (Identify pervious areas)
		Land area occupied by rain gardens/bioswales	Oak Park Managed Landscape Areas
		Private land area occupied by green roofs	Properties with Green Roofs
		% of residents that have dedicated 30% of their yards to native plants	School Community Gardens
	Increase green infrastructure on public properties	Land area occupied by public community gardens	RainReady and Rainscapes projects – rain gardens and permeable pavement
		Public land area occupied by green roofs	Green Alleys
	Increase conversion of paved areas to ones that manage stormwater (permeable pavement or depaving)	Public land area occupied by all-natural landscaping (all roadway medians, pollinator parkways, etc.)	Existing Public GSI Projects
Land area of green infrastructure that has an engineered stormwater mitigation function			

Enhanced Management is defined as...

actions related to the care and maintenance of open spaces that are intended to support biodiversity as well as ecological health and function



Enhanced Management looks like...



Habitat conservation + preservation



Allowing some leaf litter to remain on the ground



Sustainable construction practices



Proper maintenance + monitoring



Plantings integrated with solar panels



And more!

Enhanced Management is measured by...

Goal	Objective	Indicator	Baseline Data
30% of Oak Parkers are practicing enhanced management	Increase number of Oak Park property owners participating in EM practices on their property (residential, commercial, etc.)	% of property owners that are applying EM practices on their properties	# of households in RainReady and Rainscapes Programs
	Increase number of Oak Park Village-owned assets being maintained via EM practices	% of Village-owned assets that are being maintained via EM practices	Oak Park Managed Landscape Areas Parks Master Plan / Park Assessments Sustainability Report Goals
	Increase number of Oak Parkers knowledgeable in and aware of EM practices	% of Oak Park property-owners who have received education on enhanced management strategies	Library Program Data (# of workshop participants)
	Existing 48% tree canopy coverage is maintained and cared for across Oak Park	% tree canopy coverage	2021 Landcover Analysis, Urban Tree Canopy

Key Principles

- All Land Should Be Counted
- Green Infrastructure Can Include Stormwater Management (but it doesn't have to)
- Define Enhanced Management Widely
- Consider Connectivity and Equity

Baseline & Opportunities Methodology

1) Map Existing GI and Biodiversity Baseline Measures

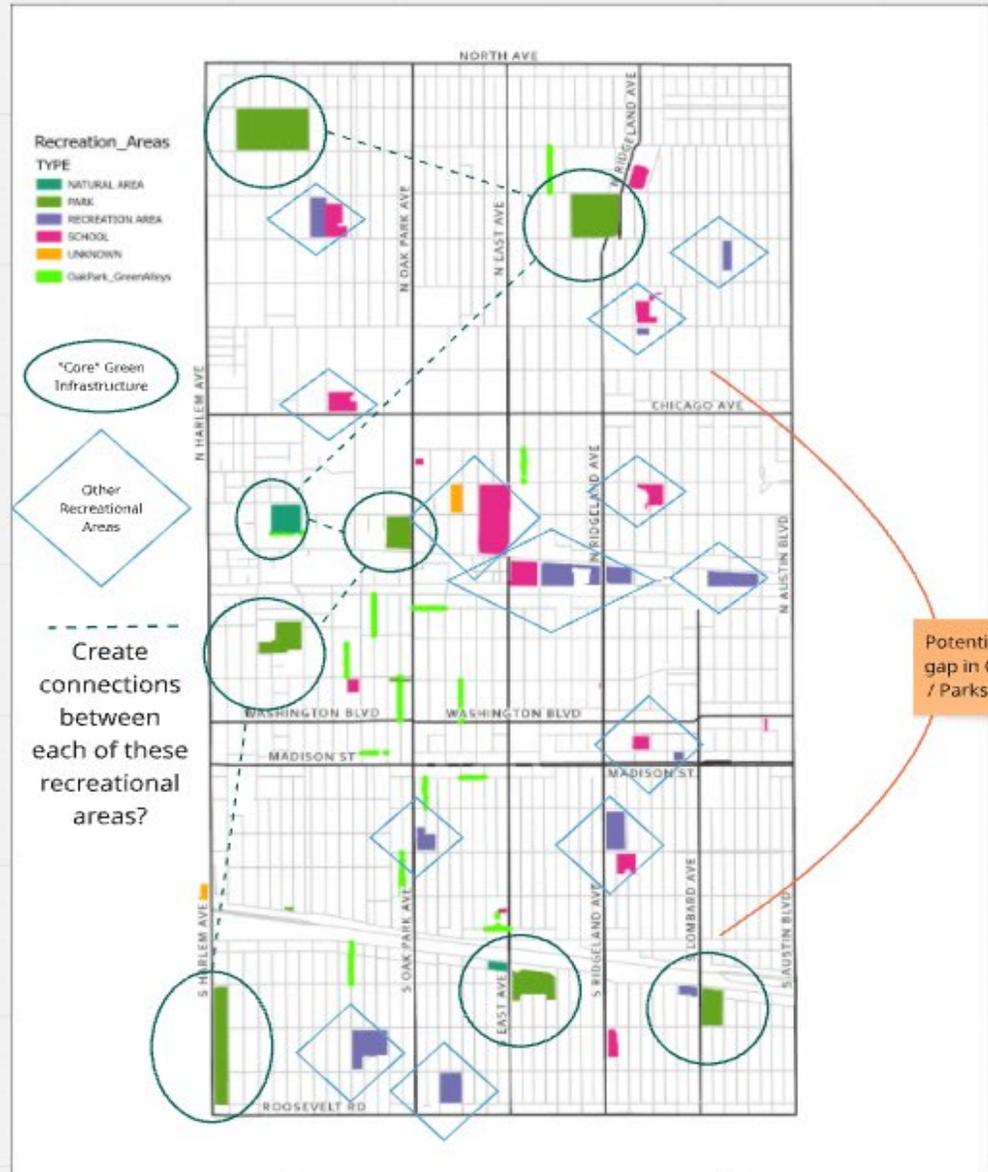
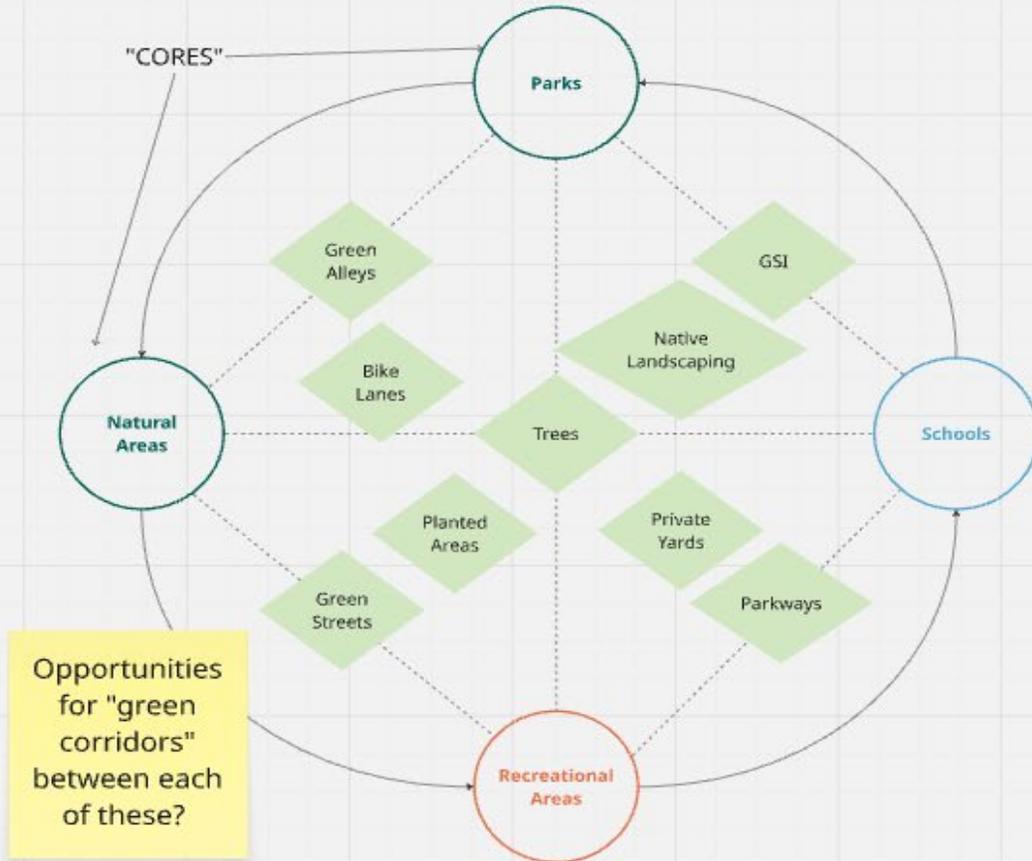
1. Develop baseline understanding of existing variety of species and vegetation in Oak Park. *(Data: Biodiversity Survey, publicly uploaded iNaturalist observations, Oak Park Tree Inventory)*
2. Establish baseline percentage of Oak Park land that is considered GI. *(Data: Aerial imagery, Rainscapes data, other known GI assets)*
3. Where data availability allows, gauge resident participation in enhanced management practices. *(Data: Rainscapes participation data)*

2) Opportunity Analysis and Planning

1. GI + Biodiversity Equity Assessment *(Data: CROP Climate + Social Vulnerability Indicators Indicators)*
2. GI Connectivity via Green Corridors *(Data: Existing road networks, bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks + alleys)*
3. Recommended Enhanced Management + Stewardship Practices *(Data: Non-spatial; from Community Engagement + Materials Review)*

GOAL:
Establish 30% of Oak Park's land as green infrastructure or enhanced park management for native plants, wildlife, and people.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



Thank you!