

---

---

# **Winnetka Environmental and Forestry Commission**

**Strategic Plan**

**and**

**2009-2010 Implementation Plan**

---

---

**As adopted by the Commission on 9 September 2009**

---

---

**Winnetka Environmental and Forestry  
Commission  
Strategic Plan  
and  
2009-2010 Implementation Plan**

**As adopted by the Commission on 9 September 2009**

---

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Strategic Plan.....</b>	<b>3</b>
.....Overview .....	3
I.    It’s All about Energy .....	5
II.   Steward the Natural Environment .....	6
III.  Redirect the Built Environment .....	7
IV.  Reduce, Reuse, Recycle .....	8
V.   Educate and Inspire .....	9
VI.  Benefit-Cost .....	10
VII. Think Globally .....	11
<b>2009-2010 Implementation Plan .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Initial Projects being Undertaken .....</b>	<b>14</b>

**Winnetka Environmental and Forestry Commission  
Strategic Plan  
and  
2009-2010 Implementation Plan**

**Executive Summary**

The Winnetka Environmental and Forestry Commission is adopting its Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan for 2009-2010. The following is a short summary of the key elements of these plans.

**Mission:** To facilitate environmental and forestry stewardship, resource conservation and sustainability on a personal, local and regional level, to raise public awareness of environmental issues and best practices, and to bring about changes in public policy, where appropriate, through a collaborative, measurable, science-based process.

**Goals:** Using principles that define areas of focus and guide activities, the Strategic Plan is organized around seven guiding principles which are elaborated in full in the following pages. Using those principles, the Commission has set specific goals in the following areas for 2009-2010:

- Energy Conservation
- Forestry and Open Space
- Water Conservation
- Green Building
- Recycling
- Awareness and Collaboration

The specific goals for each of these areas are set forth in the Commission's 2009-2010 Implementation Plan elaborated on pages 12 and 13.

In all cases the goals are to be tested against the following questions:

1. What changes will be made?
2. What are the benefits and how will they be measured?
3. By what method will the change be implemented?
4. What will it cost?
5. What is the likely or anticipated response?



# Winnetka Environmental and Forestry Commission

## Strategic Plan

### Overview

#### **Mission:**

To facilitate environmental and forestry stewardship, resource conservation and sustainability on a personal, local and regional level, to raise public awareness of environmental issues and best practices, and to bring about changes in public policy, where appropriate, through a collaborative, measurable, science-based process.

#### **Commentary:**

Encouragement and facilitation involve education and changes in life style through ordinance and/or pricing of services, as well as expenditure of Village funds to provide the high performance infrastructure that facilitate stewardship and conservation. Sustainability requires utilizing the minimum number of resources to protect the environment, while maximizing the benefit for the producer and community, without compromising future generations. Accomplishing this mission requires integrated activity with the Village staff, other Winnetka boards, and governing bodies that serve the greater Winnetka area and region.

#### **Principles:**

Principles that guide the Commission's work are divided into two groups: areas of focus and activities. Those that define the **areas of focus** include:

- Reduce energy consumption and increase use of renewable and/or low carbon energy sources
- Preserve and enhance the forest canopy and publicly accessible open and green space
- Encourage and facilitate construction of high performance (green) buildings, infrastructure, and neighborhoods.
- Reduce water and air pollution, water consumption, and solid waste

Principles that **guide activities** that span all four of the focus areas are:

- Educate and engage the public to increase awareness of the importance of environmental stewardship and resource and energy conservation
- Study and recommend Winnetka-centric changes in policy and expenditures through a measurable, data based process involving public input
- Collaborate with Winnetka and regional governmental bodies and environmental and conservation organizations

### **Context within which the Commission Operates:**

The Village Council has given the Winnetka Environmental and Forestry Commission a very broad mandate to assist the Village in disseminating information about environmental and forestry matters and to make recommendations concerning policies the Village might adopt. The Commission will continue its historical functions in forestry and is adding environmental issues in an advisory role to the Village Council. The specific charges are contained in the enabling ordinance establishing the Commission.

The Commission is aware that the Village of Winnetka is a small municipality and many solutions to environmental issues may well be better handled at the national, regional, state or other levels of government. Accordingly, the Commission plans to focus its resources on local solutions which can have an impact and to take advantage of expertise available from many sources and the synergies which can be achieved through partnering with other organizations and municipalities.

Each of the four major areas of activity identified in the principles will be approached from three perspectives:

Public education and participation

Enhancement of Village's own operations and municipal incentive or regulation

Collaboration with other governmental bodies and environmental organizations

A review of the preferences of the members of our Commission and the answers to the 2008 Winnetka Caucus questionnaire clearly dictates that our major effort should be devoted toward education of our residents. By doing so, over a sustained period it is hoped that we can change the culture of our community and make it easy and popular to engage in environmentally friendly practices. We anticipate recommendations to the Village will be made only after a thorough, data based study.

### **Road Map of this Document**

The elaboration of the strategic plan that follows is organized around the seven guiding principles, expanded by commentary. The elaborative comment is followed by possible study topics suggested by the Commission in its formative stage.

## **I. It's All about Energy - Reduce energy consumption and increase use of renewable and low carbon energy sources**

### **Commentary on why this principle is important**

Even if global climate change were not an issue of global strategic importance, the age of abundant liquid hydrocarbon energy is about to end. There is some evidence that the consumption of oil and natural gas now exceeds its discovery. The energy prices of 2008 will return and permanently increase the cost of powering our homes and automobiles in a dramatic fashion. Winnetka is uniquely positioned for this inevitability. Its walkable geometry and rapid transit service allow a life style that will be the envy of all and must be preserved. The Village is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of energy conservation initiatives because it owns its own electric distribution system and through the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency generates power.

### **Possible Projects**

These projects are not listed in any order and will be studied with the assessment process described under the assessment principle. Those projects that leverage Winnetka's walkable, "Village" ambiance and address energy efficient buildings are listed under the "high performance environment" principle.

- Increase public awareness of environmental and energy issues
- Leverage the net metering ordinance that credits homeowner generated electricity through solar and wind power
- Review energy audits of Village, Park District and school district activities and set goals
- Partner with EPA's Energy Star Program
- Encourage other Winnetka organizations to adopt and promote this principle
- Provide Winnetkans with access to the many available resources and information
- Utilize the expertise of the Village electric staff to further energy efficiency and conservation strategies

## **II. Steward the Natural Environment - Preserve and enhance the forest canopy and publicly accessible open and green space**

### **Commentary on why this principle is important:**

This principle together with that for facilitating construction of high performance (green) built assets encompasses the visible environment that provides the Village-like ambiance. This focuses on the natural environment and the other on the built assets. This principle expands the Commission's consideration beyond trees in order to ensure that the natural environment receives sufficient attention. However the natural environment is defined, some form of ecologically balanced, publicly accessible open space will provide the foundation. This space is necessary for a multitude of needs that include but are not limited to visual and kinetic enjoyment, storm water management, maintenance of biodiversity, etc. Even though most of the larger, "green," open spaces are managed by the Winnetka Park District and schools, the Village manages more if streets, sidewalks and parkways are included.

### **Possible Projects**

These projects are not listed in any order and will be studied with the process described under the assessment principle.

- Storm water management
- Bio-swales
- Rain gardens
- Maintain and expand the number of public access to beaches and forest preserve
- Determine the value of open space
- Increase biodiversity

### **III. Redirect the Built Environment - Encourage and facilitate construction of high performance (green) buildings, infrastructure, and neighborhoods.**

#### **Commentary on why this principle is important:**

This principle together with that for preservation of the forest canopy and green and open space encompasses the visible environment that provides the Village-like ambiance. This focuses on the built environment and the other on the natural. One means of defining high performance buildings and neighborhoods is that provided by LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) Building (B) and Neighborhood Development (ND). While LEED focuses on single buildings and neighborhoods, it is important to include the Village's line, pipe roadway and transit infrastructure systems that support the buildings and neighborhoods.

#### **Possible Projects**

These projects are not listed in any order and will be studied with the process described under the assessment principle.

- Foster adoption of USGBC (US Green Building Committee) LEED building and neighborhood certification strategies
- Green roofs
- Develop standards for buildings
- Recycle construction debris
- Low flush toilets, showers
- Illuminate with CFL bulbs, LEDs and other low energy consumption lighting
- Energy efficient appliances

#### **IV. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - Reduce water and air pollution, water consumption and solid waste**

##### **Commentary on why principal is important:**

The overall objective is to reduce pollution of the air and water, and ground in, near and adjacent to Winnetka. One of the most valuable resources available to Winnetka is Lake Michigan water, which we drink and in which we recreate. As adjacent communities require more water, Winnetkans will be required to share more fully this resource. Winnetka reduces pollution of the ground in Winnetka by exporting its waste. However, this export will become increasingly difficult and costly. Pollution of water shed by Winnetka as waste or storm water runoff will become increasingly scrutinized and regulated. Thus with an eye to the future, it is important that the Commission recommend methods to enhance existing municipal mechanisms to reduce consumption of water, the export of solid waste and pollution of its runoff water. Air pollution is also important in heavily urbanized areas, but is less controllable locally, and the Commission will have a greater need to work with other and larger organizations to affect change.

##### **Possible Projects**

These projects will be subdivided by material: air, water, and ground. These projects are not listed in any order and will be studied with the assessment process described under the assessment principle.

###### **Air**

- Develop an air management plan
- Review green alternatives for Winnetka power plant
- Investigate mechanisms to reduce idling of vehicles

###### **Water**

- Reduce pollution of storm water shed to Skokie River
- Reduce use of nutrients that stress the Skokie River
- Recommend mechanisms to reduce disposal of chemicals in storm water
- Recommend mechanisms to conserve Lake Michigan water through Village and other Winnetka governmental bodies
- Audit sanitary sewer and water conveyance for leakage
- Recommend methods to enhance bluff protection and restoration

###### **Land (waste reduction)**

- Educate public of mechanisms to recycle items not currently picked up through curbside recycling (brochures, web sites, newspaper tidbits)
- Investigate feasibility of Village drop off center for expanded recycling
- Develop policy to increase recycling of business waste
- Place recycling containers in commercial districts, parks and schools
- Investigate mechanisms to facilitate recycling of construction waste

## **V. Educate and Inspire - Increase public awareness of the importance of environmental stewardship and resource and energy conservation.**

### **Commentary on why this principle is important**

This need of information is constant across all focus areas and has been identified by response to the caucus questionnaire as the most desirable activity of the Commission.

Education about the importance of environmental stewardship and resource conservation is the foundation for changing life style through ordinance and/or pricing of services. It is all the more necessary because all too often the negative effects of poor life styles and poor policy are not seen for many years if they are visible at all.

### **Possible Projects**

These projects are not listed in any order and will be studied with the process described under the assessment principle.

- Development of the website
- Environmental tips
- Projects like the Green Bay Trail and beach cleanup
- Public lectures
- Demonstration of rain garden with park district and garden clubs
- Development of printed material for public distribution
- Presentation to schools and community organizations
- Articles in the Winnetka Report, Winnetka Talk and Tribune Local
- Develop community events such as sidewalk sale and parades

**VI. Benefit-Cost - Study and recommend Winnetka-centric changes in policy and expenditures through a measurable, data based process involving public input.**

**Commentary on why this principle is important**

Projects to induce a greener life style should be ranked according to their potential to produce the greatest change for Winnetka with the least effort. While focusing on this ratio of “Benefit-Cost” can lead to an over emphasis of small change with very small efforts, project choice should not ignore necessary large but difficult changes.

Any comparison is dependent upon same step: identification of a critical aspect of that desired, which can be measured. Measures may be multiple and complicated. Environmental issues are challenging because many involve complex, long-term economic transfers and complex chemical interaction. Thus they require detailed study that includes economics, chemistry and physics, as well as public behavior.

A simple form of determining benefit to cost ratio of changing or greening Winnetka life style can be summarized with a series of five questions:

- Change:** What is the activity or resource to change?
- Benefit:** What is the measureable benefit?
- Method:** Are there mechanisms that can be adopted or expenditures made by the Village to alter the activity or resource?
- Cost:** What is the identifiable cost?
- Response:** What is the public response to the proposed mechanism or expenditure?

These questions might be efficiently answered by citizen task forces chaired by a Commission member before submission to Village staff for confirmation.

## **VII. Think Globally - Collaborate with Winnetka's neighbors and regional governmental bodies and environmental and conservation organizations.**

### **Commentary on why this principle is important**

It is important to leverage the environmental energy expended by others across the focus areas. By collaborating and interacting with similar committees in other locations it will be possible to determine best practices and identify model legislation. There may also be opportunities to work with other Winnetka governing bodies to become more sustainable. Many of the possible projects can be better addressed by creating county- and region-wide action plans and regulations. Thus collaboration with these over arching governmental bodies and environmental and conservation organizations will be necessary to affect changes in public policy beyond that of the "Village" board.

### **Possible Projects**

These projects are not listed in any order and will be studied with the process described under the assessment principle.

- Identify and collaborate on issues of local concern at a regional and national level
- Join the regional partnership of the Chaddick Institute
- Consider ordinances that could become state laws

Demolition recycling

Elimination of plastic bags

Prohibition of phosphorous in fertilizer

Prohibition of plastic water bottles

# Winnetka Environmental and Forestry Commission

## 2009-2010 Implementation Plan

The Environmental and Forestry Commission has adopted its Strategic Plan and identified five goals to be established for the near term. These were derived by taking some materials from the Plan's four areas of focus, and creating a separate water conservation goal. The Commission will advance its mission in the next twelve to twenty-four months by working toward achieving the following goals and objectives. The members of the Commission expressing interest in each of them are shown as "Champions" for those objectives.

**1. Energy Conservation Goal: To reduce the Village's carbon footprint by reducing energy use and increasing the use of renewable and non-fossil fuels for energy. Objectives:**

- Evaluate and, if warranted, recommend implementing improved electric distribution and metering technologies.
- Evaluate and, if warranted, implement energy-efficiency audits of public and private buildings;
- Work cooperatively with the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency to develop and offer energy efficiency programs;
- Work cooperatively with the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency to diversify its power supply portfolio to increase its use of renewable resources

**Champions for the above are Chuck Dowding and Lawson Whitesides.**

**2. Forestry and Open Space Goal: To maintain the Village's ambience and quality of life by preserving and enhancing forestry and open space in the Village. Objectives:**

- Enhance, when needed, the Village's successful forestry program to preserve and enhance the forest canopy.
- Suggest, when needed, changes in the forestry ordinance and regulation.
- Review the Village's Comprehensive Plan, *Winnetka 2020*, as it pertains to preserving and enhancing green/open space, and develop a policy and program to implement the *Winnetka 2020* recommendations concerning green spaces.
- Research possible avenues for elevating the value of open space conservation in reviews and decisions concerning planned or proposed development

**Champion for the above is Katie Stevens**

**3. Water Conservation Goal: To conserve and enhance water resources in and around the Village by reducing water use and water pollution. Objectives:**

- Engage the community in public education on strategies and techniques to conserve water and reduce water use;
- Engage the community in public education on strategies and techniques to reduce the amount of pollutants entering stormwater runoff;
- Evaluate and, if warranted, implement sustainable stormwater management techniques such as the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, and other stormwater Best Management Practices.

**Champion for the above is Debbie Ross.**

**4. Green Building Goal: To provide a sustainable built environment in the Village by developing environmentally friendly building standards and development practices for development and redevelopment in the Village. Objectives:**

- Engage the community in public education on sustainable building principles, practices, and programs;
- Research and develop sustainable building and site development recommendations, standards, guidelines, or ordinances.
- Research and, if warranted, implement a construction/demolition debris recycling program.

**Champion for the above is Jan Bawden**

**5. Recycling Goal: To conserve natural resources and reduce waste by promoting sustainable purchasing, by maximizing recycling and reuse of materials, and by reducing the amount of material disposed of as refuse. Objectives:**

- Explore with SWANCC the feasibility of providing a “one-stop” drop-off facility at the Village Yards for expanded collection of recyclable materials beyond the current curbside recycling program.
- Implement a commercial district recycling program.
- Recycling containers and collection throughout the public areas of the Village, Park District and schools.

**Champion for the above is Dave Abell**

**6. Awareness and Collaboration Goal: To raise public awareness of environmental issues by promoting and advancing community dialogue and education concerning sustainable stewardship of the Village’s environmental resources. Objectives:**

- Develop a recycling brochure for items not in the curbside recycling program.
- Develop a website for environmental information.
- Develop environmental tips for weekly public distribution.
- Hold community environmental events.
- Prepare presentations and articles of environmental information.
- Collaborate with other governmental and non-profit organizations to develop best practice

The Environmental & Forestry Commission will implement these goals by determining the benefit to cost ratio of each proposal by considering the five questions in the “Benefit-Cost” section of the Strategic Plan.

## Initial Projects Being Undertaken for 2009-2010

- **Energy Conservation:**
  - Energy Audits Staff is considering
  - Energy Consumption Meter Staff is researching
  
- **Forestry and Open Space:** To come
  
- **Water Conservation:** To come
  
- **Green Building:**
  - Construction and Demolition Debris Staff is presenting
  
- **Recycling:**
  - One-Stop Recycling Center Staff is considering
  - Commercial Recycling Staff will propose
  
- **Awareness and Collaboration:**
  - Recycling Brochure Completed
  - Website Under development
  - Environmental Tips In process
  - Chaddick Institute collaboration To be proposed