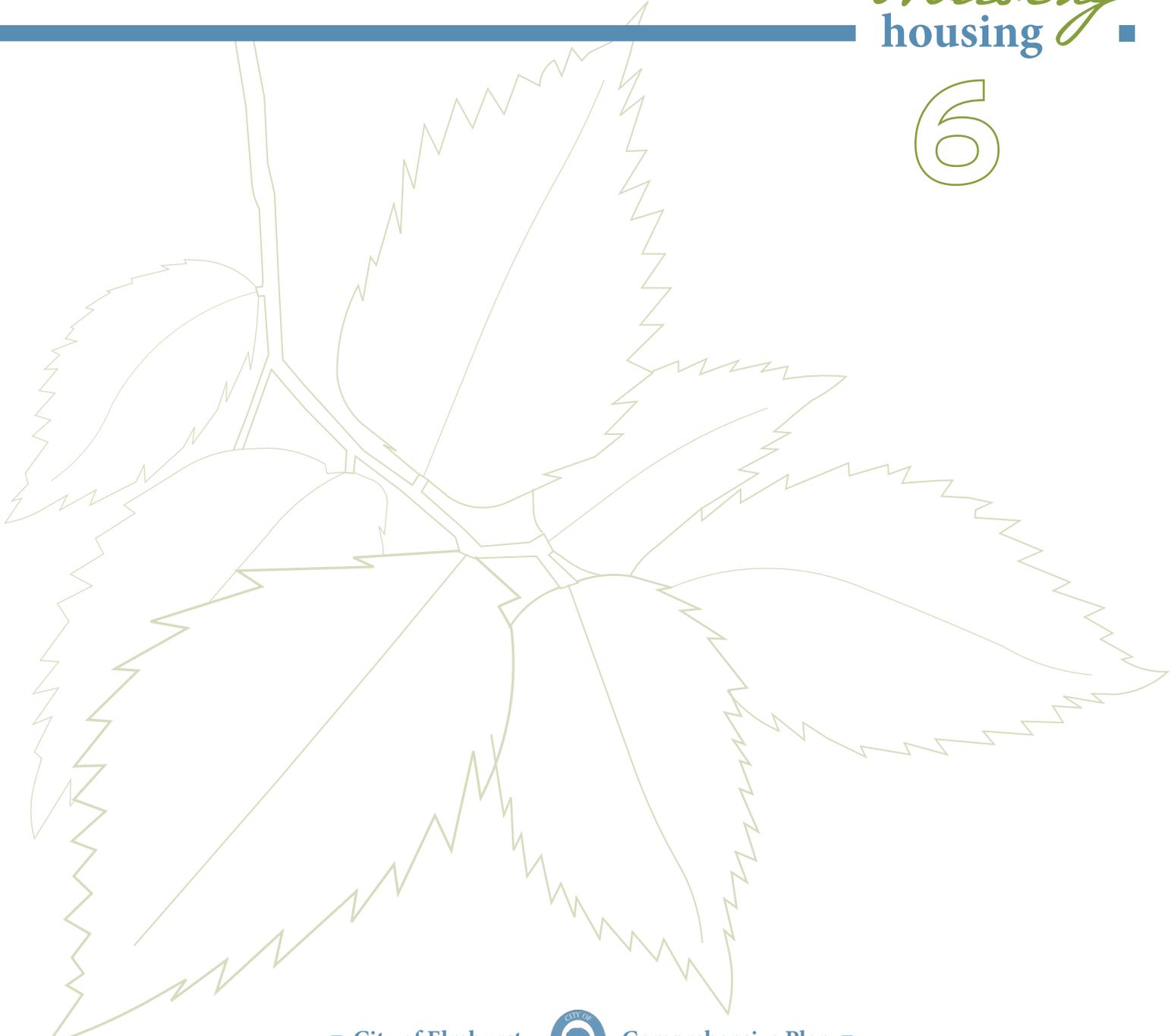




6





HOUSING

Elmhurst's strong residential neighborhoods are one of the city's best assets: quality housing stock in a variety of sizes that is available for sale or rent at a range of price points ensures that generations of Elmhurst residents can be accommodated. This housing variety is an especially important tool for maintaining the economic and social vitality of the city: children, singles, married couples and empty-nesters all play an important role in the life of a community, and excluding any one group through the inadequate provision of housing stock would detract from Elmhurst's quality-of-life. Because Elmhurst is a desirable, mature community with limited undeveloped space, recent redevelopment activity and increasing property values have resulted in community concern regarding the scale and pace of redevelopment and decreasing levels of affordability throughout the community. The City should provide clear guidance and standards in addressing how these two trends will be addressed and leveraged to support Elmhurst's dynamic neighborhoods.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Maintain Elmhurst as a diverse, inter-generational residential community by providing housing options to meet a variety of lifestyles.

Objectives:

1. Encourage a variety of housing options, including townhomes and multi-family condominiums and apartments at various price points at appropriate locations within the city.
2. Evaluate future development of senior housing communities.
3. Ensure quality design and appropriate height and density to make multi-family residential developments compatible with the predominant single-family character of the community.
4. Ensure that developmental regulations and requirements are proportional and appropriate and do not place unnecessary burdens on developers.
5. Explore the possibility of establishing first-time home-buyer programs at favorable loan terms in collaboration with Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), community banks or local employers to increase home-ownership opportunities for young individuals and families.

Goal 2: Encourage well-maintained housing stock and contextually-sensitive residential development.

Objectives:

1. The existing visual and environmental character of Elmhurst's residential neighborhoods, including lot sizes, street configuration, and streetscaping elements, should be preserved and enhanced.
2. Protect residential uses from encroachment by incompatible uses through effective buffering and land-use planning.
3. Undertake regular and active property maintenance and code enforcement in residential areas.
4. Perform community outreach to inform residents of the economic necessity of the redevelopment of housing stock, and the methods which the City employs to ensure that redeveloped property is visually appropriate for its surroundings.
5. Coordinate with local financial and lending institutions to ensure their ongoing involvement in neighborhood residential lending.

Goal 3: Promote strong neighborhoods throughout Elmhurst that are well-served by a sufficient number and variety of community facilities and services.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate public infrastructure investments to complement planned and existing residential development.
2. Target neighborhood-serving commercial and retail land uses to residential neighborhoods to simultaneously reduce auto dependence and encourage local economic development.
3. Ensure multimodal transportation opportunities for all residents through the provision of continuous networks of sidewalk and bicycle lanes.

Policies

1. Elmhurst should seek to maintain its diverse housing stock as a means of attracting and retaining residents.
2. New and redeveloped residential uses should be compatible in scale and character with the surrounding residential uses.
3. Adequate facilities and services should continue to be provided for residential neighborhoods.
4. Consistent property maintenance and code enforcement should be undertaken to maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods.
5. Adequate transitional screening, including the use of retail, multi-family, and mixed uses, should buffer residential from adjacent non-residential uses.
6. The City should encourage building techniques and materials that reduce negative environmental impacts and utilize renewable energy sources.





HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

Until the recent nationwide slowdown in the housing market, Elmhurst maintained a reconstruction rate of one percent of the housing stock per year. At this rate, the City's entire housing stock would be redeveloped over the course of one hundred years – a relatively modest rate of change. This redevelopment cycle, with the exception of certain homes of historical or architectural value, is appropriate to maintain consistently high quality housing stock. Elmhurst's geographic constraints mean that redevelopment of existing residential structures is the only way to provide replacement housing stock that reflects the spatial and design preferences for modern living.

Some residents have expressed concerns that this pattern of housing redevelopment has resulted in housing stock that is out of scale and inappropriate within the context of established neighborhoods. Elmhurst maintains comparatively strict zoning standards and building controls with which to guide both redevelopment and new construction. In order to further control the appearance and massing of the redeveloped housing stock, the City may choose to pursue more stringent zoning, design and bulk controls. This decision could increase the number of existing non-conforming structures. This would in turn create a future administrative burden on homeowners as they attempt to update this housing stock. The City should avoid taking actions that would function to create a disincentive to future reinvestment, particularly without understanding the clear benefits from such change. This construction activity is essential to increasing the tax base and ensuring that Elmhurst remains an attractive community to families.

Additional concerns have been expressed that historic homes are being demolished to provide land for redevelopment at a significant cost to the visual and historic environment of neighborhoods. It is clear that Elmhurst has historic housing stock which should be preserved and protected into the future, but age alone does not necessarily denote historic significance. The City should work with preservationists and local historians to identify key historic properties through a set of predetermined criteria and develop protections from demolition as well as financial incentives for the preservation of these homes. This would create a transparent mechanism for identifying and protecting valuable historical resources while still allowing vital redevelopment activity to occur on appropriate properties.



Multi-Family Housing

Incentives

The City should create a series of incentives which match the City's stated policy goals and developmental priorities to encourage visually- and spatially-consistent residential redevelopment. To promote contextually-sensitive residential development, the City could offer incentives for a number of design elements, including:

- Setbacks consistent with the average for the residential block,
- Use of defined building materials,
- Incorporation of specific architectural details, including use of street-level windows and the positioning of rooflines and garages, and
- Retention of existing trees and shrubbery to the extent feasible.

These design elements are examples of the types of issues that could be incentivized by the City in order to promote contextually-sensitive development. The City should conduct community outreach to determine the major design issues associated with redeveloped housing stock, and subsequently base the creation of incentives on related guidelines.



Housing Options for Seniors

As America’s population continues to age, the availability of adequate housing options for senior citizens will become increasingly important. A market assessment report completed for the City by Goodman Williams Group in April 2007 identified five senior housing units that provide 546 independent living units and 442 skilled nursing units, with two additional senior developments in the planning stages.¹ The two planned developments would provide an additional 217 independent units, 53 assisted living units, and 32 skilled nursing units. The assessment found that developers have adequately responded to the market demand for senior housing in Elmhurst, although additional units may be required within the next ten years.

The City should continue to monitor demographic trends and respond as necessary with targeted planning and development assistance for senior citizen residential development. Senior housing should be planned for areas with access to multimodal transportation options, including sidewalks and mass transit. Preserving mobility and facilitating access to neighborhood-based goods and services as part of the land use planning framework will ensure that Elmhurst’s senior residents are retained as a vital part of community life.

Empty-nesters who have not yet begun to require the personal care services provided by senior housing facilities are another key demographic for which Elmhurst should strategically plan. While empty-nesters may have spent decades creating and raising a family in Elmhurst, maintenance and upkeep required by larger family homes may become undesirable as children move out and begin their own households. As this demographic continues to expand, fueled by the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, adequate housing stock and access to goods, services and amenities will be necessary to support their transitioning lifestyle needs.

Workforce and “Starter” Housing

As discussed in the Community Scan report, just over 83 percent of the households in Elmhurst own their homes, according to 2000 U.S. Census, while the remaining 17 percent rent. Elmhurst remains affordable for the majority of its residents, but an increasing number of both homeowners and renters are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Thirty percent is the affordability threshold established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As Elmhurst’s housing

¹ *Market Assessment, City of Elmhurst*. Chicago: Goodman Williams Group (April 2007), p. 18.



Single-Family Residential



Multi-Family Residential

values rise, this trend is expected to continue in the future. Residential redevelopment will raise overall property values in the City.

In order to provide an adequate supply of workforce and “starter” housing, the City should closely examine existing housing conditions, the housing market and future requirements as a part of the comprehensive planning process. Because a comparatively small percentage of Elmhurst residents rent, it is especially important that the City ensure existing rental housing stock is retained and replacement units are constructed.



Incentives

The City should also create a series of incentives which match the City’s stated policy goals and developmental priorities to encourage construction of affordable housing. To do so, the City could offer incentives to developers for the inclusion of a specific percentage of units affordable to households making 80 percent of the area median income for homeownership, or 60 percent for rental opportunities. As previously mentioned, it is crucial that Elmhurst retain resident of all ages, incomes, and household sizes in order to maintain its vitality and stability. The provision of affordable housing is critical to this effort.

Incentives used to encourage the development of affordable housing could include:

- Fee waivers,
- Streamlined permitting,
- Density bonuses, and
- Deviations from lot coverage, lot width, or setback depth.

Another program designed to support affordable housing construction is the Illinois Energy Efficient Affordable Housing Program², initiated in 1998. This program seeks to increase affordability by reducing operating costs for homeowners. This program provides grants to Illinois-based non-profit and for-profit housing developers for the inclusion of energy efficient building practices in the rehab or new construction of affordable housing units. Energy efficient building practices emphasized under the program include high insulation levels, indoor air sealing, controlled ventilation and high efficiency heating systems. Average energy savings range from 50 percent to 75 percent.

Incentives are a powerful tool that the City can use to encourage private sector development decisions that align with the policies and priorities of the City. To provide the greatest degree of clarity and transparency to the development community, these incentives must be clearly stated and directly reflect the City’s stated developmental goals and policies.

GREEN BUILDING GUIDELINES

Green building techniques and construction materials have already entered the marketplace, and their presence and visual influence is projected to rapidly grow over the coming years. Elmhurst should consider creating green building guidelines that directly address how these elements could

² For more information on the Illinois Energy Efficient Affordable Housing Program, see http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Energy_Recycling/Energy/Energy+Efficiency/housing_energy_program.htm



Green building technique: solar panels mounted on the roof.

be incorporated into new and existing development. Solar panels, wind turbines, rain barrels, and other “green” technology have the capacity to significantly reduce energy and natural resource consumption, which the City should encourage (more information in *Chapter 9: Sustainability*). The City should also, however, ensure that these new technologies are incorporated into the built environment in a manner that supports their functionality while causing minimal disruption to community aesthetics.

Some cities, including Boston, are choosing to combine public policy goals by requiring the use of green building techniques and materials by developers who are applying for funding to develop affordable housing. Boston’s program, Green Affordable Housing Program (GHAP), is an expansion of Mayor Thomas Menino’s January 2007 decision to make Boston the first major city in the nation to require compliance with the US Green Building Council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certified standard as part of the private development review process. The City’s Department of Neighborhood Development has since adopted design standards which require developers to design and build at a LEED Silver level in an effort to promote energy efficiency, green building techniques, and healthy homes strategies.³ The major goals of this program are to promote development which:⁴

³ City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development, Online: http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/D_green_housing.asp#About.

⁴ City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development,



- Respects the architectural detailing ... prevalent in the surrounding neighborhood,
- Is sensitive to the residential building types, existing massing, set backs, siting and open space elements of the neighborhood,
- Results in cost-effective construction,
- Results in low maintenance costs and energy efficiency for renters and homeowners,
- Uses existing interior and exterior space to enhance the quality of life of the residents and neighbors,
- Minimizes environmental impact on City infrastructure and promotes public health, and
- Minimizes environmental impact at the regional, national, and global level by reducing green house gas emissions and water use.

While this approach may be too aggressive and inappropriate in smaller-scale cities with significantly less constricted real estate markets, it is an innovative method for tying together public policy goals and development objectives. Elmhurst may consider ways in which to combine policy goals that facilitate the attainment of multiple development objectives.



IMPLEMENTATION

While Elmhurst's residential sector is one of its strongest assets, the City must continue to work with residents, businesses, and community groups to ensure that future residential development and redevelopment trends support City physical, economic, and social objectives. The City of Elmhurst should consider pursuing the following strategies to achieve successful implementation of desired housing improvements. Policy numbers at the end of each implementation action correspond with the policies stated at the outset of the chapter.

Reconnaissance

City staff should perform an assessment of housing stock to determine the degree to which existing supply meets projected future demand while maintaining a diversity of resident ages and income levels. [Policy 1]

Collaboration

City departments may form intra-departmental, geographically-based task forces to coordinate infrastructure, land use planning, public facility, and public service investments to ensure efficient developmental activities. Community

Residential Design Standards, Online: http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/PDFs/D_14-1_2008_DND_DESIGN_STANDARDS-060608.pdf.

outreach should be conducted to understand the issues associated with residential development that has been identified by residents as contextually-inappropriate.

The City should also develop a clearinghouse to collect and disseminate information about funding sources and assistance available to homeowners for home purchasing and improvements. [Policies 2, 3]

Regulatory Actions

The City of Elmhurst may consider ways in which different policy goals could be combined through the use of incentives or requirements to result in the fulfillment of multiple developmental objectives. City staff should perform an internal regulatory audit to determine areas of the residential development process that could be streamlined to facilitate development without compromising City oversight.

Pending the outcome of outreach activities, the City may reassess existing development regulations and the zoning code to determine whether changes could be made to provide additional developmental controls without placing an undue burden on developers. Property maintenance and code enforcement should be undertaken on a regular basis to ensure compliance.

City staff should partner with preservationists and local historians to develop a series of criteria to evaluate structures for their historic significance and guide any subsequent preservation activities. [Policies 4, 5, 6]



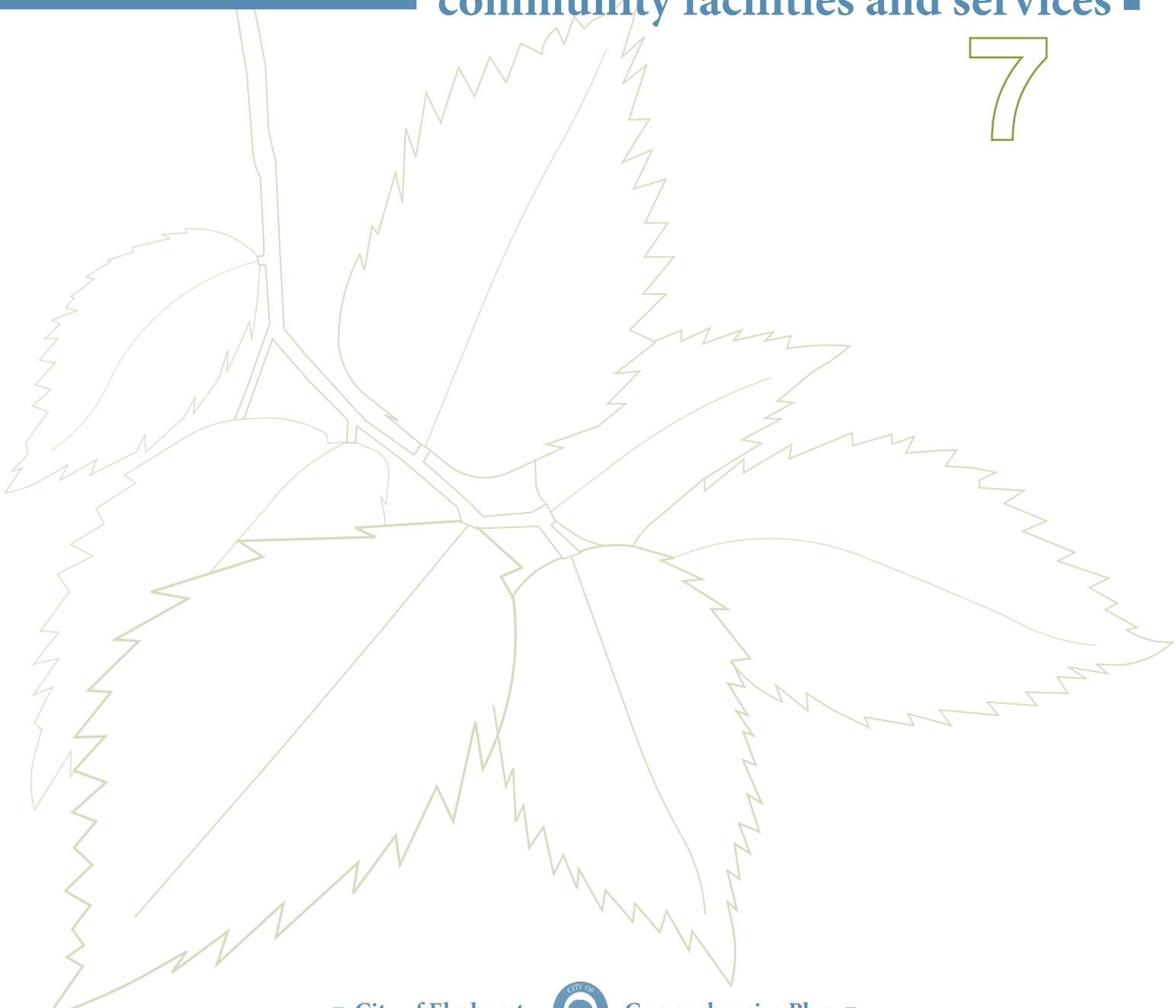
Survey existing housing stock





Community Facilities and Services
community facilities and services ■

7





COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

In Elmhurst, community facilities and services are provided by a range of governmental, private and non-profit organizations. With its robust mixture of educational, recreational, and cultural facilities, Elmhurst maintains a solid network of strong institutions. This chapter is based on field surveys, plan reviews, and feedback obtained from representatives of diverse facilities. The recommendations included are based on information presented in the previous framework plans, background information gathered from the Downtown Plan (2006), and the Community Scan Report (2007). The content is also guided by extensive community review of the concepts presented in the Preliminary Plan document (Spring 2008).

Community facilities and services serve the daily needs of residents and help define the overall quality of life. Elmhurst is a mature residential community and, as a result, community facilities and services are well-established within the City. To this end, it is important to maintain and upgrade existing facilities when necessary in order to continue to provide a high level of service over time. To achieve this, a set of goals and objectives for maintaining high-quality community services and facilities were developed and vetted by the community at large. It should be emphasized that this plan presents general goals and policies for community facilities; it is not intended to substitute more detailed planning and programming which should be undertaken by individual municipal departments.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Maintain superior community facilities and the efficient and effective delivery of the highest quality services to all residents and businesses in Elmhurst.

Objectives:

1. Maintain and provide adequate facilities for all City departments to ensure that they can function effectively.
2. The City has an important role in the design, installation, coordination, planning and maintenance of future utility, natural gas, telephone and electric service provision within the city. It must work to equitably distribute service facilities throughout the city.

Goal 2: Continue to provide high quality municipal services throughout the city.

Objectives:

1. Public wastewater and sanitary sewer facility improvements will be coordinated with any new large developments or remodels in the City and will recognize exist-

ing and programmed capacity plans.

2. Ensure that every neighborhood can have, if it chooses, a complete complement of City-standard right-of-way improvements, including curb, gutter, and enclosed street drainage; street lights; sidewalks; and fully paved streets.

Goal 3: The location and provision of fire and police protection, water service and public utilities, hospital and human care services and other community and governmental facilities will be based on reliable long-range land use plans.

Objectives:

1. Tailor service delivery programs within the City based on local requirements such as elderly or children's services.
2. Enrollment thresholds for primary schools will not be more than one mile.

Goal 4: Provide a quality telecommunications infrastructure.

Objectives:

1. Advancements in technology have greatly improved communication tools in the last decade. Elmhurst should continue to work to stay up-to-date in providing the capabilities for cellular communications, data transfer and wireless internet technology for residents and businesses alike.

Goal 5: Provide an excellent system of high quality public education at all levels accessible to each member of the community and housed in structures that utilize energy conserving design techniques to the greatest extent possible.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the continued excellence of the public secondary and elementary schools within the city.
2. Continue the high level of collaboration between the City and Elmhurst College regarding the sharing of facilities and administration of programs.
3. Encourage and cooperate with local School District 205, Elmhurst College, the Elmhurst Park District and the DuPage County Forest Preserve District to create unique youth and student-oriented outdoor and educational activities within the City.

Goal 6: Expand and enhance cultural, arts, recreation, and entertainment resources available to City residents and visitors.





Objectives:

1. Encourage the provision of the highest quality open space, recreation facilities and programs within the community that serves all age-groups.
2. Maintain and support the educational, cultural and community resources including the public library, Elmhurst College, the museums, the Elmhurst YMCA, and Elmhurst Memorial Hospital as significant assets that contribute to the high quality of life in the city.
3. Provide diverse recreational and leisure activities to meet the needs of Elmhurst citizens.
4. Continue to enhance and reinforce the public commitment to the community through the construction and maintenance of libraries, services, and community buildings.

Goal 7: Protect and expand existing recreation activity areas such as natural resources and parks.

Objectives:

1. Through public process and dialogue, encourage and accommodate citizen participation in the design of park facilities.
2. Ensure the protection (and maintenance of) existing trees and other natural resources on City property.
3. Continue planting programs on public property, pocket parks, and along roadways, all of which add to the attractive character of the City.

Policies

The following policies provide a framework for guiding the creation and implementation of community facilities strategies.

1. Minimize stormwater runoff from existing development, and address the cumulative impacts of existing and planned future land use within known drainage basins and watersheds when installing curb and gutter improvements.
2. The handling and disposal of solid and hazardous waste should be done in ways that that minimize land, air and water pollution and protect public health. This includes supporting and enhancing all waste reduction and recycling efforts. Maintain service standards, encourage technological or programmatic innovations and demonstration phases that enhance service benefits or savings.
3. Establish a telecommunications policy that promotes city-wide coverage with a minimum of visual intrusiveness and maximum coverage capacity.
4. Continue a close and cooperative working relationship with School District 205, Elmhurst College, and other local private and parochial schools to ensure continu-



Elmhurst City Hall

ing quality educational services and facilities in the future.

5. Create and assist in the improvement of art and cultural facilities and functions, providing additional accessible and affordable space for educational, artistic, recreational or cultural organizations in Elmhurst.
6. Enhance parks, recreation and cultural services through effective quality management and communication.



EXISTING FACILITIES

The City of Elmhurst provides a number of essential facilities and services to help sustain the high quality of life enjoyed within the community. These include the City administrative functions conducted at City Hall, police and fire protection conducted at one police station and two fire stations, and the following:

- The Public Works Department provides standard improvements (such as curb, gutter drainage, lights, sidewalks, and paved streets) and other municipal facilities include a wastewater treatment center, open spaces for parks and recreation, parking decks and surface lots for public parking, and radio transmission facilities.



- The thirteen public schools in Elmhurst are part of Elmhurst Community Unit School District No. 205 and are expected to accommodate an increase in enrollment by nearly ten percent by 2015. With a recent renovation program of the public schools completed, the quality of the district’s space has been enhanced significantly.
- Elmhurst Memorial Hospital currently operates two facilities within Elmhurst and has long been seen as a community asset. The main hospital facility located on Berteau Avenue is planning a major move and expansion to accommodate its growing needs. Once complete, the new hospital campus will occupy the area north of Roosevelt Road between South York Road and Euclid Avenue.
- The Elmhurst Park District manages 460 acres of parkland within 28 parks ranging from small neighborhood pocket parks to Wilder Park Conservatory which features exotic flowers and foliage.
- The DuPage County Forest Preserve District owns 425 acres of land within or near Elmhurst that boast a variety of trails and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Community facilities are shown on *Figure 17: Existing Community Facilities and Service Framework* on the following page.

In addition to the City, community facilities and services are provided by a range of non-governmental, private and non-profit organizations. With its robust mixture of educational, recreational, and cultural facilities, Elmhurst maintains a solid network of strong institutions. Elmhurst is home to one private liberal arts college, Elmhurst College, with a 38-acre downtown campus. In addition to this, the city has a number of cultural and recreational facilities, such as the Elmhurst Historical Museum, the Elmhurst Art Museum and the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art. Many of the facilities highlighted in this section are described in greater detail in the Community Scan Report (May 2007) and the Downtown Plan (2006).

Because first-rate community facilities and services provide an important backbone in a largely residential community such as Elmhurst, continued cooperation and investment in community facilities and services are essential to maintaining Elmhurst’s overall quality of life.



Wilder Park



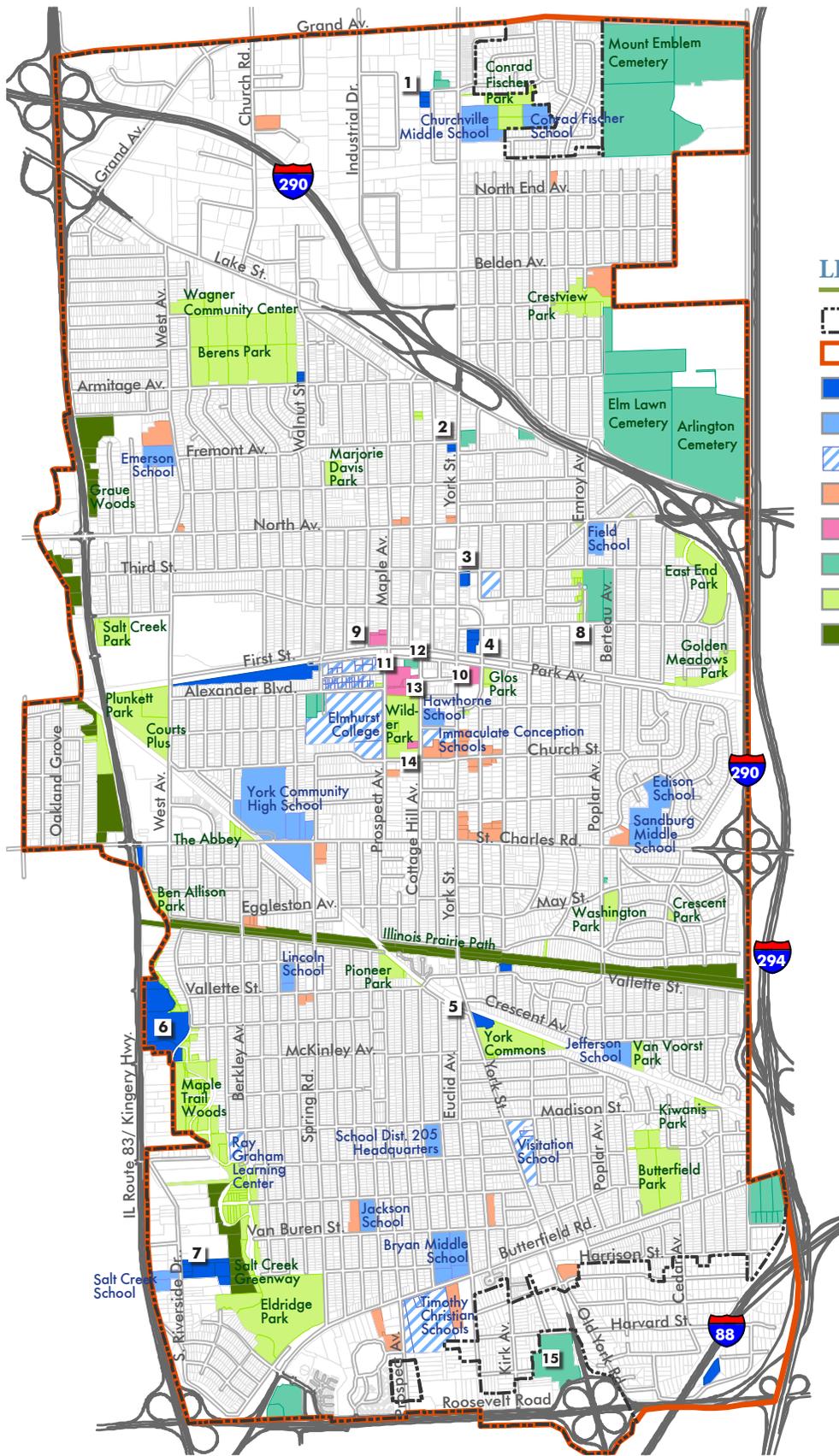
Elmhurst Public Library

FUTURE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES FRAMEWORK



Figure 18: Future Community Facilities and Services Framework on the following page graphically depicts proposed facility and service changes in Elmhurst over the next ten to fifteen years that complement the goals and objectives listed above. It is expected that the existing public, institutional, park and open space uses will remain largely unchanged (with the exception of the Elmhurst Memorial Hospital relocation). The following facilities improvements and community service initiatives are currently underway in Elmhurst:





LEGEND

-  City of Elmhurst Boundary
-  Planning Area Boundary
-  Municipal
-  Public School
-  Private School / College
-  Church
-  Cultural and Recreational
-  Other Institutions
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Forest Preserve

Municipal Facilities

1. Fire Training Tower
2. Fire Station # 1
3. City Hall
4. Police Station
5. Fire Station # 2
6. Wastewater Treatment Plant
7. Public Works Garage

Other Facilities

8. Elmhurst Memorial Hospital
9. Elmhurst YMCA
10. Elmhurst Historical Museum
11. Public Library
12. Post Office
13. Elmhurst Art Museum
14. Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art
15. Elmhurst Center for Health

FIGURE 17: EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICE FRAMEWORK

Scale: 1" = .50 miles



HNTB



- **Physical upgrade to the existing Fire Station #1 on York Street:** This Station is adequately meeting current needs, but would benefit from additional storage space as well as more room for an Emergency Operating Center.
- **Reconstruction of Fire Station #2:** This Station will be rebuilt in order to meet current and anticipated future needs.
- **The expansion of Public Works Garage on South Riverside Drive:** The City is planning to purchase an additional 3.5 acres of land immediately south of the existing garage to allow for its expansion to adequately meet future needs.
- **Planned improvements to the water system:** In addition to ongoing maintenance work on the existing system, the City is planning system upgrades near the south end of the planning area. Future improvements would be necessitated if and when residential properties east of York Street are annexed.
- **Elmhurst Memorial Hospital transition:** Elmhurst Memorial Hospital is planning its transition from the current Berteau Avenue site to the new Elmhurst Center for Health site north of Roosevelt Road. This transition is expected to catalyze redevelopment in the Yorkfield sub-area.

Municipal Facilities

Overall, the existing municipal facilities will meet the needs of the City in the future, and major changes are not expected. The planned expansion of the public works garage (mentioned above) to the south side of South Riverside Drive should work to adequately meet the demand for increased space in the near future. The two fire station upgrades, once complete, will have adequate space to meet fire protection demand in the future. Elmhurst's City Hall, located in the downtown, is approximately 45,000 square feet in size and is adequate for current needs, but at present it has limited storage space, and should staffing needs increase in the future an expansion or relocation of the city administrative functions might be necessary. As the hospital relocation gets underway, care must be taken to lessen the impact of construction on the surrounding neighborhoods in south Elmhurst. Additionally, sensitive reuse of the former hospital site on Berteau Avenue (whether the property is retained by the hospital or not) will be crucial to minimizing any adverse impacts on the surrounding residential areas.

Water System

In general, the existing water distribution system is ad-



York High School



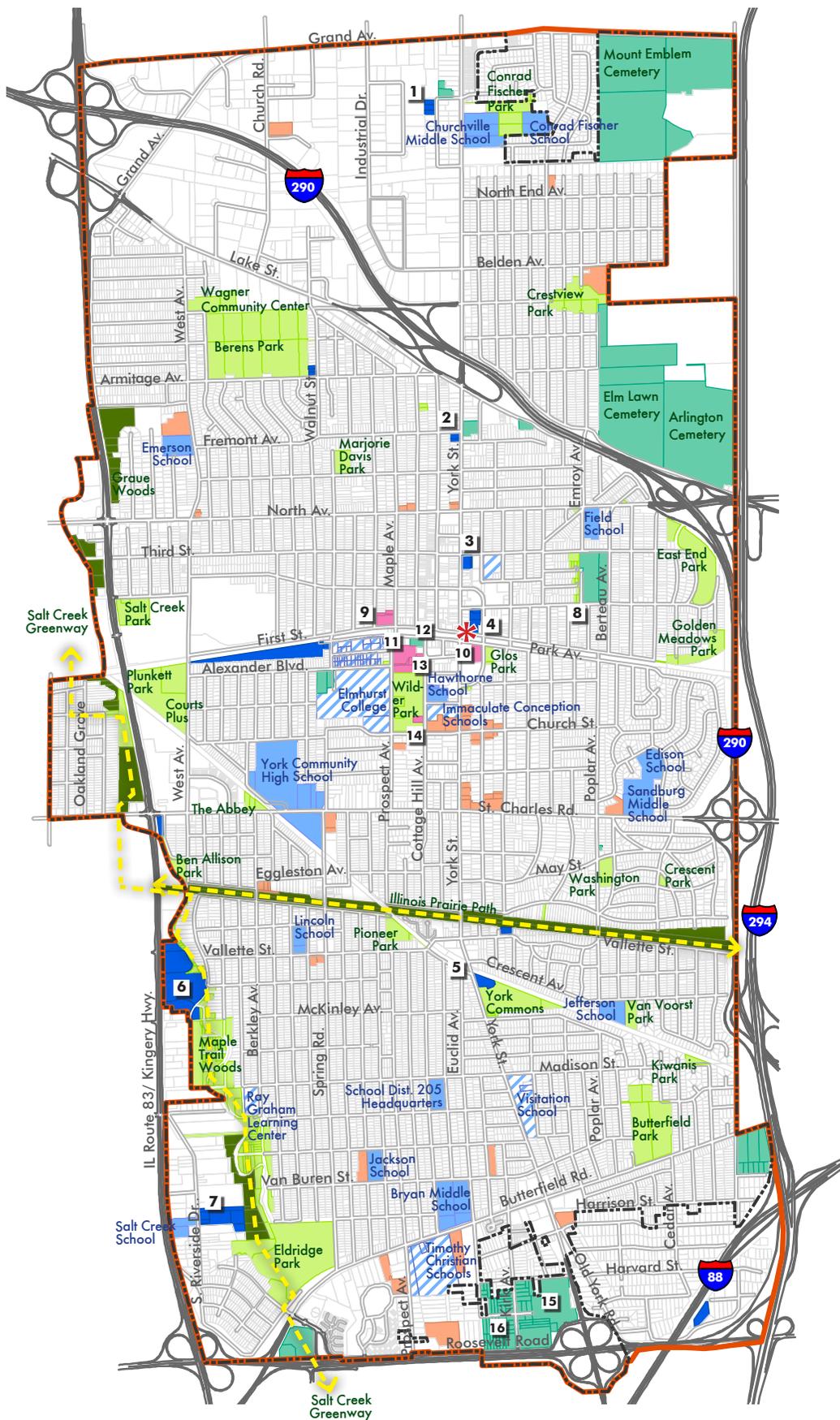
Elmhurst Memorial Hospital

equately and will continue to meet the future needs with incremental maintenance and targeted system upgrades. In addition to ongoing maintenance work on the existing system, the City is planning system upgrades near the south end of the planning area. Future improvements to the delivery system would be necessitated if and when residential properties east of York Street are annexed.

Storm and Waste Water Collection Systems

The majority of the City of Elmhurst is served by a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. In general, this system is currently meeting the City's needs and no improvements are needed at this time. Eventually, a system should be developed to give relief to storm sewers that will provide





LEGEND

-  City of Elmhurst Boundary
-  Planning Area Boundary
-  Municipal
-  Public School
-  Private School / College
-  Church
-  Cultural and Recreational
-  Other Institutions
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Forest Preserve
-  Trails and Greenways
-  Metra Station

Municipal Facilities

1. Fire Training Tower
2. Fire Station # 1
3. City Hall
4. Police Station
5. Fire Station # 2
6. Wastewater Treatment Plant
7. Public Works Garage

Other Facilities

8. Elmhurst Memorial Hospital (Existing)
9. Elmhurst YMCA
10. Elmhurst Historical Museum
11. Public Library
12. Post Office
13. Elmhurst Art Museum
14. Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art
15. Elmhurst Center for Health
16. Elmhurst Memorial Hospital (New)

FIGURE 18: FUTURE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES FRAMEWORK

Scale: 1" = .50 miles





added stormwater disposal capacity and thereby reduce the risk of flooding in basements and streets. To this end, flood control issues and regulations must be considered in review of any proposed project for redevelopment. For example, further study in the York Vallette Business District is needed to determine the degree of overflow on the vacant lots during storm events. Once the level of severity is known, remediation and drainage efforts can be undertaken. Additionally, where it is economically feasible, separate storm sewers should be extended to surface drainage outlets to reduce the drainage load on the combination sewer and treatment systems.

Electric Utility and Telecommunication Systems

Advancements in technology have made (and undoubtedly will continue to make) great improvements in communication tools. The 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act promotes nationwide expansion of telecommunications infrastructure with limits on the extent that local governments can regulate telecommunication facilities. To this end, these recommendations serve to strike a balance; providing City-wide coverage with the desire to minimize visual intrusiveness as much as practical. To address future telecommunication abilities in Elmhurst, a series of industry forums to discuss the capabilities of the current data infrastructure and the plans for renovation and expansion to meet the future needs of the community might be beneficial. Any system upgrades to the telecommunications infrastructure should be coordinated with other municipal projects.

Education

Both private and public educational facilities are among some of the most fundamental community elements in Elmhurst. In addition to education, they provide unique cultural, recreational and social opportunities. Elmhurst is particularly fortunate to have the resources and facilities of the 38-acre Elmhurst College in the downtown Cultural Campus area. Continued coordination and sharing of resources between the City and College for extra-curricular community-based activities is recommended. Additionally, the City should work to facilitate collaborative coordination among the School District 205, the Elmhurst Park District, Elmhurst College, the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, and others as appropriate to create easily accessible and safe locations for youth and student-oriented outdoor fitness or education-based activities within the City.

Cultural and Entertainment Facilities

An area of the city in which a high concentration of arts and cultural facilities are present serves as an anchor of attraction. The tendency of cultural activities to cluster together is generated from the excitement that is created when there



Elmhurst College



Police Station

is more than one activity occurring in a limited area. The *Elmhurst Cultural Campus Plan (2004)* was developed to facilitate such a clustering of the City's fine cultural, recreational, and educational facilities and services uniquely organized around the Wilder Park area of downtown.¹ The *Elmhurst Downtown Plan (2006)* identified a range of collaborative development and facility improvement possibilities for the Cultural Campus many of which have been implemented in the intervening years. As the remaining recommendations for the downtown and Cultural Campus are implemented, efforts should be made to involve the arts community in the design of the physical environment and arts facility provision.

Parks and Recreation

Because Elmhurst is a mature community, there are limited opportunities to acquire new space for parkland. However, through the planning process, several opportunities for improved recreational facilities were identified. These are briefly discussed following page.

¹ Elmhurst Cultural Campus Collaborative, *Steering Committee Recommendations*, July 2004, page 1.



- **Review and consideration of Elmhurst Park District’s Comprehensive Master Plan (2007) “Opportunities & Wish List” Items:** The Elmhurst Park District Plan includes recommendations for improving existing facilities and programs to better meet the needs of the community. It also includes recommendations for administrative efficiency, development of alternative funding sources and continued inter-agency cooperation to provide more comprehensive and improved park and recreation services to the community. The Park District’s Comprehensive Master Plan (2007) should be used as a reference tool and resource in working with the Park District in program implementation.
- **On-going coordination with Elmhurst College:** In addition to the campus expansion detailed in the 2004 Elmhurst Cultural Campus Collaborative Report, Elmhurst College’s 2007 Master Plan calls for a new 1,700 space parking structure south of the railroad along Park Avenue. Potential additional improvements include new residence halls, a performing arts center in the northeast corner of campus, and new track and field facilities. This expansion of the college allows for the city to make efficient use of both the existing and future facilities available downtown.
- **Successful collaborative relationships:** Elmhurst’s network of educational, governmental, and institutional entities should continue to effectively partner with one another in order to turn individual strengths into community-wide assets. For example, the Elmhurst Park District has an agreement with School District No. 205 to share existing facilities for a variety of programs and educational activities.
- **Integration of park and recreational space provision with development review:** To ensure any new construction in Elmhurst has adequate green or open space associated with its construction, coordination of site plans at the development review stage must be addressed. Where incorporating green space into the site plan is infeasible, consider implementing an in-lieu park dedication fee that provides for green space or parkland elsewhere within the boundaries of the city.

Enhanced linkages between Elmhurst neighborhood parks and other types of park recreation facilities such as the Courts Fitness Center or the Sugar Creek Golf Course (co-owned with the neighboring Village of Villa Park) should be encouraged to provide quality fitness opportunities for residents. Other connections to the surrounding DuPage County Forest Preserves in Elmhurst are discussed in *Chapter 8: Natural Resources*.



Recreational opportunities at The Hub, administered by Elmhurst Park District



IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Elmhurst should consider pursuing the following strategies to achieve successful implementation of desired community facilities improvements. Policy numbers at the end of each implementation action correspond with the policies stated at the outset of the chapter.

Sustainable Approaches

Continue to pursue high levels of standards for traffic safety, and cost effective citywide refuse collection management techniques. Consider a variety of funding recovery options to ensure effective and equitable distribution of community facilities and services. [Policy 1]

In order to minimize stormwater runoff from existing development, encourage the use of permeable paving for placement in low-volume off-street parking spaces and other lightly used areas. More detailed techniques for stormwater management are discussed in Chapter 9: Sustainability. Additionally, addressing the cumulative impacts of existing and planned land use within drainage basins during the development phase will help to better manage the impact of stormwater in Elmhurst. [Policy 2]

The City should continually explore new approaches for waste reduction, recycling, energy recovery, and methods of disposing of solid wastes. The City should encourage, via education and technical assistance, the use of safer, less hazardous products in waste processing and work to conserve and recycle as much energy as possible during the process. [Policy 3]



Zoning Amendments

The City should promote, where feasible, the co-location of new utility distribution and communication facilities, and when doing so, is consistent with utility industry practices, examples include: shared trenches, transportation rights-of-way, towers, poles and antennas. To the maximum extent possible, the construction of new towers and limits on the height of those towers should be minimized. The use of camouflaging or “stealth technology” where antennas are mounted on existing buildings or disguised into surrounding natural elements (such as trees) should be employed wherever possible. [Policy 4]

Collaboration

A continued effective school system will require the corporation of both the City and the schools. The City of Elmhurst should continue to work with school district officials to solve any unforeseen problems and realize opportunities of mutual interest. Because both the local school and college facilities play an important role in satisfying local continuing education, recreation and community meeting space, continued open collaboration and communication between the city and the schools is recommended. [Policy 5]

Access

In order to provide additional accessible and affordable space for educational, artistic, recreational or cultural organizations in Elmhurst, capitalize on existing assets such as the resources offered by the Downtown Cultural Campus and ensure that the Elmhurst Public Library continues to maintain free and equitable access for residents. Encourage the Elmhurst Library, Elmhurst Historical and Art Museums and other institutions such as the York Theatre and the Lizzadro Museum to participate in and stage free cultural, literary or artistic events that showcase a variety of creative disciplines from different cultures. Support for the presentation of these types of events can be found from Elmhurst business associations such as the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce, and the Elmhurst City Centre, a non-profit corporation organized and supported by the Downtown business community and the City of Elmhurst. Work to ensure that facilities comfortably accommodate the special needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. Additionally, encourage thoughtful siting of events or facilities, give preference for performance locations that are easily accessible and highly visible, such as spaces near public transit, or sites where shared parking facilities are available. Also, encourage performances or events in non-traditional settings such as neighborhood parks, community centers, schools, train stations and in public areas of private developments. This



‘Stealth Technology’ in use ; the cell phone tower is disguised

type of event planning can help to reach new audiences and meet the goal of enhancing access to cultural resources for both residents and visitors alike. [Policy 6]

Capital Needs

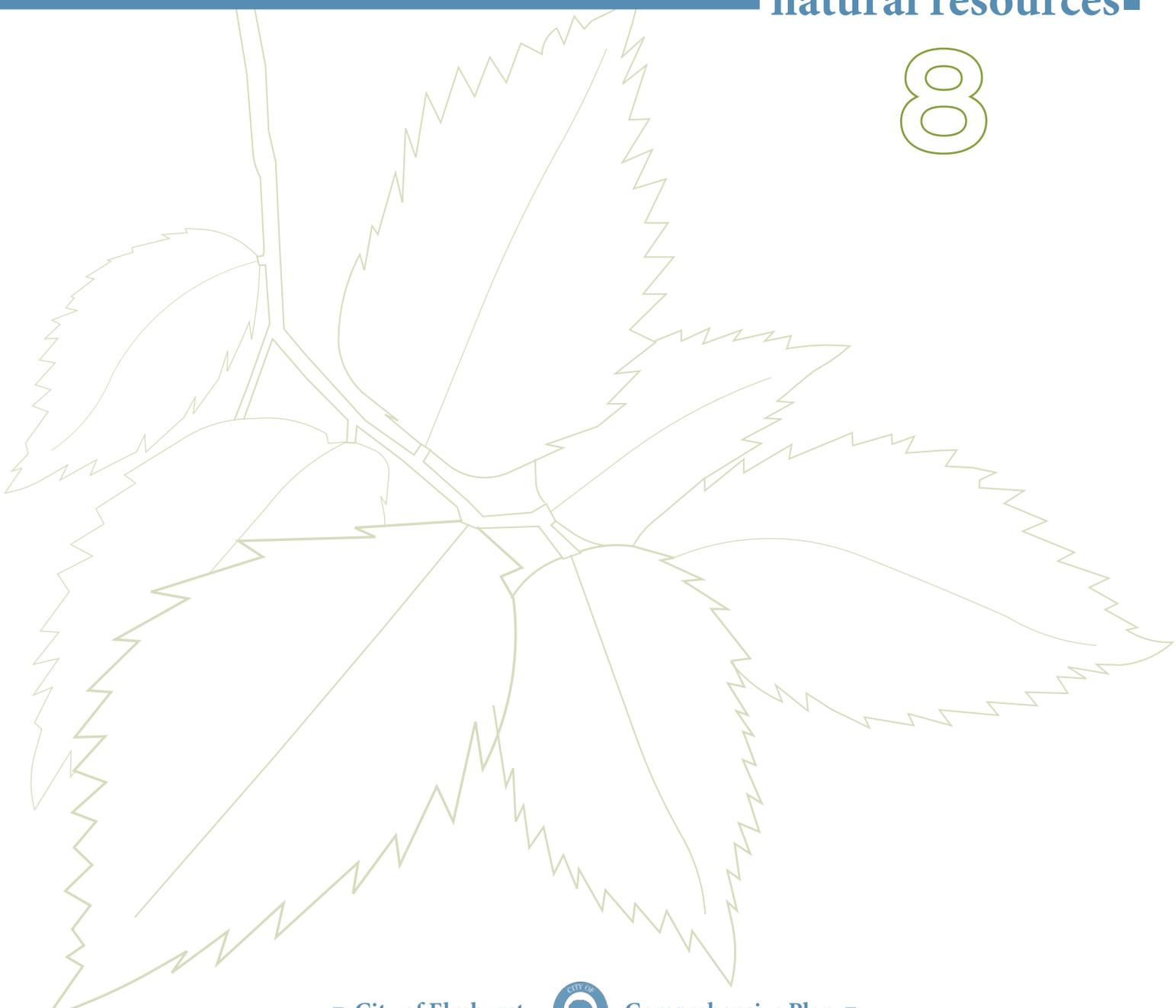
In order to enhance existing park facilities a plan for supplemental financing for sound capital improvements, maintenance and operational support is needed to implement the improvements. The City can pursue alternatives such as trust funds, dedicated taxes, donations and user fees to fund enhancements to park and trail facilities. [Policy 7]





Natural Resources
■ natural resources ■

8





NATURAL RESOURCES

Elmhurst’s natural features and resources, such as waterways, wetlands and wooded areas are an essential part of the community, providing a restorative balance between the built and natural environments. The City’s natural areas serve important hydrological functions in addition to providing a healthy assortment of recreational opportunities for residents. Elmhurst residents indicated in the Park District Comprehensive Plan (2007) that they value the natural areas and open space in their community for both recreation and environmental reasons. For Elmhurst to protect its diverse and rich natural environment, it must promote long-term environmental sustainability, ensuring public access to natural features and encouraging conservation over the long term. Based on review of past plans and feedback obtained from stakeholders, this chapter works to refine the goals, objectives and policies presented in the previous framework plans.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Preserve natural resources and open space.

Objectives:

1. Protect important natural habitat, and promote the use of native plant species, especially in riparian areas, to ensure biodiversity, protect sensitive biological resources and contribute to local identity.
2. Protect tree resources such as large native trees that add to improved air quality.

Goal 3: Improve access to natural areas.

Objectives:

1. Ensure accessibility to Elmhurst’s natural areas for the public enjoyment and recreation of all residents.
2. Maintain and promote the use of rail-to-trail corridors such as the Illinois Prairie Path for recreational use and events. Continue to maintain existing trails.

Policies

The following policies provide a framework for guiding the creation and implementation of natural resource strategies.

1. Continue to work and coordinate with the DuPage County Forest District and the Elmhurst Park District in identifying preservation opportunities and complementary land use activities.
2. Educate residents about the impact, consequences and mitigation measures associated with buildings located in the 100-year floodplain.

3. Establish and maintain standards for recreational and occupational use of natural areas within Elmhurst in order to make natural areas more accessible for exploration. This includes the maintenance of scenic areas and views as well as the proper upkeep of well-marked trails and way finding signage.



EXISTING NATURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES

Elmhurst supports an extensive system of local parks and open spaces maintained by the Elmhurst Park District, which blend with the natural environment and provide recreational and fitness opportunities for area residents. Along the western edge of the City, Salt Creek and the area immediately surrounding it is protected as open space in the Cricket Creek (Graue Woods) and Salt Creek Greenway forest preserves. The creek and the natural areas provide effective protection from flooding and double as a scenic and recreational amenity for City residents. A significant portion of the Salt Creek 100-year floodplain is maintained as open space, assisting in the effective flood management of the area.

Another natural feature is the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie, a six acre strip of preserved land beside the Illinois Prairie Path that contains approximately 85 native prairie plant species. The Elmhurst Great Western Prairie serves as a living museum of the pre-settlement landscape of Illinois.

In addition to the larger forest preserves, Elmhurst has an extensive system of local parks, program areas, and open spaces maintained by the Elmhurst Park District which provide an array of both passive and active recreation areas. This includes over 430 acres of neighborhood parkland, the Wilder Park Conservatory, the Wagner Community Center, the Abbey Leisure Center for seniors, Safety Town, Skate Park, the Courts Plus Fitness Center, Bearfoot Fun and Fitness Center, the Sugar Creek Golf Course, and the Hub at Berens Park which provides batting cages and miniature golf. The Elmhurst Park District has twice been nominated as a finalist for the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association. These and the abovementioned natural features and resources are depicted on *Figure 18: Natural Features*.



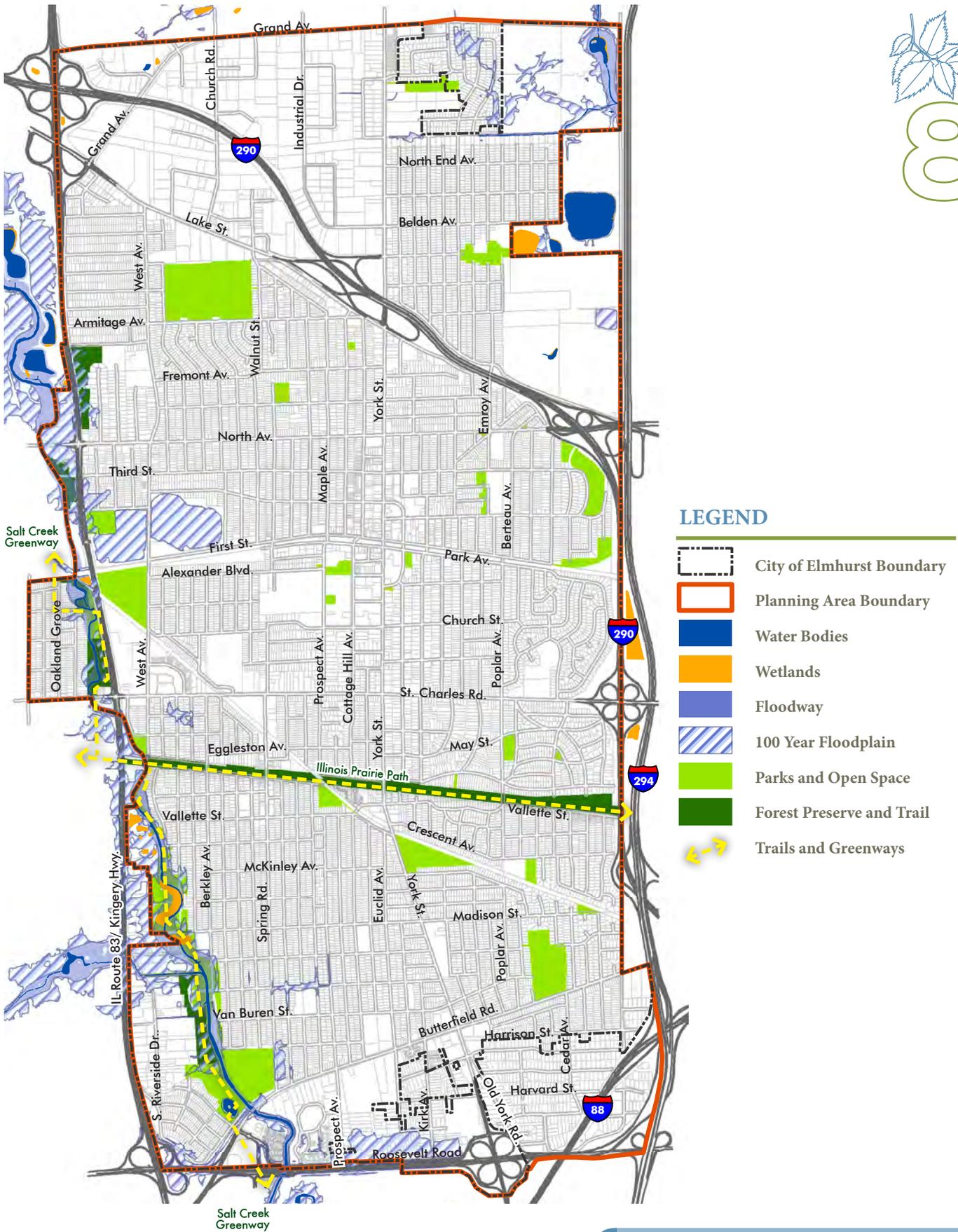


FIGURE 19: NATURAL FEATURES



NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN

The following section describes proposed open space recommendations proposed in Elmhurst over the next ten to fifteen years. It is expected that the existing public park and open space uses will remain largely unchanged. The following are natural features and recreation area initiatives that are on-going or currently underway in Elmhurst:

- **Salt Creek Greenway:** Improvements in the Elmhurst area include provisions for a new multi-use trail, stream bank stabilization, a regional greenway trail-head, a water quality demonstration project and the establishment of a new education center along the trail near North Avenue.
- **Yorkfield Area Annex:** Though currently not yet under the jurisdiction of the City, the open space between Highways I-88 and I-294 will become new open space within the incorporated City limits. However, due to its limited vehicular and pedestrian access, an appropriate use of the space might include the installation of a solar or wind energy farm or a telecommunications tower. Once ownership and annexation is secured, the alternatives for its use should be explored in further depth.
- **Sustainability:** The City plans to take significant steps towards becoming more environmentally sustainable both by helping its citizens practice conservation techniques at home and by streamlining its own internal operations to better manage the increasingly limited share of available natural resources. More information on sustainability activities and strategies for both the City and individuals can be found in the Sustainability Chapter of this report.

Forest Preserves

Although no significant changes to the Forest Preserve boundaries are anticipated in Elmhurst, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has adopted the Salt Creek Greenway Master Plan which contains specific recommendations for improvements along the length of the creek. Construction of the 30.6-mile Salt Creek Regional Trail is underway in Elmhurst and completion is expected within the year. The trail will begin in Elmhurst at the intersection of Thomas Street and Monterey Avenue and will proceed to the Illinois Prairie Path over Route 83 and continue south to and through Eldridge Park. Ultimately the trail will connect with forest preserves in Cook County to the south.¹ The trail construction is funded with a mix of local, state and federal grants. In addition, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has set a number of pollution reduction goals for Salt Creek. These goals set benchmarks to reduce

¹ Elmhurst Park District, 2008, Online: <http://www.epd.org/news/news012108.asp>



Restored prairie land next to the Elmhurst Prairie Path



Salt Creek Greenway Trail

the amount of pollution entering the Salt Creek from road runoff and from 19 sanitary plants along the creek.² In the Elmhurst area, recommendations for the Salt Creek include several action items.

Initial improvements include:

- Stream bank stabilization to take place near where the Salt Creek crosses the Metra rail tracks.
- Vegetation buffer restoration will occur on creek-neighboring properties in the Vallette Street area.
- A regional trailhead marker and the Salt Creek Greenway Education Center are to be constructed in the near term just south of North Avenue on the existing Salt Creek Forest Preserve land.

² Online: http://northwestsuburbs.us/Corridor/Chicago_Area/Salt_Creek_Greenway/



As a result of these improvements, an opportunity for the promotion of recreational activities within the city can be catalyzed with the completion of the multi-use path alongside Salt Creek. Care must be taken to ensure that effective bicycle and pedestrian connections (as well as appropriate signage) to the recreational area are provided to the east of the greenway.

Flood Control

A significant area along the Salt Creek is within the 100-year floodplain, a considerable portion of which is maintained as open space to help with flood management efforts in the area. Several properties along Roosevelt Road in south end of the planning area however, remain in the 100-year floodplain. It is important to provide outreach and educational information in the form of easily accessible maps and clear explanations of possible mitigation strategies the residents can undertake themselves in the event of a 100-year flood.

Flood Hazard Remapping

Current flood hazard maps in Illinois are paper maps, known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and used for regulatory and flood insurance purposes. Many of Illinois' maps are outdated, some as much as 20 years. Funded by Congress, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) launched the Map Modernization Program to develop fully digital floodplain maps nationwide. The new digital floodplain maps use geographic information system (GIS) technology and local involvement is stressed to assure that data incorporated in the maps is up to date and accurate. FEMA partnered with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) (Office of Water Resources) and the State Water Survey to working jointly to prepare floodplain maps for most of Illinois following the new digital standards.

In 2006, a significant area of the Salt Creek floodplain was slated for flood hazard remapping. As a result, several properties along Roosevelt Road at the south end of the Elmhurst planning area are now in the 100-year floodplain that were not there previously (see *Figure 19: Natural Features*). Therefore, it is essential that any new proposed developments in the Roosevelt Road area provide adequate mitigation measures in preparation for the event of a 100-year flood. Any future development proposals in the area must be reviewed in light of the adjusted boundary.

Floodplain Mitigation Measures and Residential Safety

Increased impermeable surfaces, alterations of natural drainage patterns, and climate change have increased the frequency and severity of flooding events. Impacts to hydrological conditions can be mitigated with careful con-



Stream bank stabilization along Salt Creek

sideration in the planning, siting and construction of proposed developments. Depending on the severity of flood events, an area (or City) can be made eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program which may provide some level of financial relief in the event of a flood.

Other possible mitigation strategies include the construction of levees or berms, or raising existing homes higher off the ground, and improving drainage infrastructure. Additionally, for existing and new developments, the use of innovative storm drainage facilities such as bio-retention, rain gardens and pervious pavement should be encouraged to improve resident's safety during storm events. Resources describing how individuals can employ these mitigation measures on their own property should be made available at City Hall to residents located in the 100-year flood plain, and distributed by mail or email to ensure receipt of delivery.

Outreach Programs

Outreach and public education is an essential tool to successfully utilizing and preserving the abundance of existing outdoor and recreational opportunities in the Elmhurst area. This outreach can take on many forms, but chiefly it should serve to inspire residents to enjoy outdoor activities and other conservation activities.



Trails and Interpretative Signage

Trails are one of the most popular recreational amenities with residents across all ages. Trails should continue to be developed where feasible in Elmhurst, and when possible connect to other minor trails, or major “recreation spines” such as the Salt Creek Greenway or the Illinois Prairie Path. Trails that are expected to be heavily used should be at least 10 feet in width to accommodate the widest variety of user modes. Trailhead areas should provide space for sheltered picnic areas, signage (the more informative or interactive the better), public restrooms, water stations and parking facilities for users if space permits. Continuous trail systems can be linked to existing sidewalks along major streets in Elmhurst; employing themed or uniform signage could improve visibility and popularity of outdoor use.

Environmental Education

There are a number of state-wide programs that offer resources and curriculum material to inspire further study on the local environment. Examples include the Environmental Education Association of Illinois which offers resources and materials for educators and mini-grants to “formal and non-formal” educators looking to expand the implementation of environmental education throughout the state.³ In addition, the Forest Preserve District cooperates with public and private school systems to provide workshops, field trips and courses for teachers in outdoor science education. These, or similar programs, should be employed throughout the community to cultivate an understanding and appreciation of the natural environment for current and future generations. Educational measures could be worked into classroom curricula, Park District activities or Forest Preserve programs.



IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Elmhurst should consider pursuing the following strategies to achieve successful implementation of desired natural resource improvements. Policy numbers at the end of each implementation action correspond with the policies stated at the outset of the chapter.

Environmental Conservation

In order to identify and achieve further conservation opportunities in Elmhurst, continuing coordination with Forest District Preserve of DuPage County is necessary to properly implement the recommendations outlined in the Salt Creek Greenway Master Plan and establish and administer detailed regulations and procedures to protect other

³ Environmental Education Association of Illinois, Online: <http://www.eeai.net/minigrant.htm>



Environmental education



Illinois Prairie Path

environmentally sensitive areas, including seasonal wetlands, floodplains, natural landscapes, and drainage ways. The City should encourage mutual planning and intergovernmental agreements with the DuPage County, neighboring municipalities and other entities to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Where possible, efforts to increase preservation and restoration of unique natural areas with native plants and other stream bank stabilization techniques should occur. This could be achieved by community-based restoration efforts configured as group work days, events or

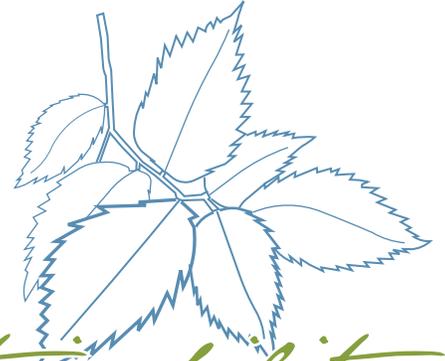


seminars on riparian health, wherein invasive brush clearing and vegetation plantings are undertaken. [Policy 1]

Special educational outreach should also be provided to City residents that might be affected by a possible expansion of the designated 100-year floodplain. Remediation efforts and tips to reduce flooding risks can be easily conveyed in informative pamphlets or City-sponsored workshops. These would serve to protect both the residents from harm and flood damage and would circumvent future relief efforts needed by city services in the event of a 100-year flood. In order to achieve consistency and uniform enforcement, consultation of the updated Salt Creek Greenway Master Plan and the most current version of the Salt Creek 100-year floodplain map should be required when reviewing development proposals that fall within the Salt Creek Watershed. [Policy 2]

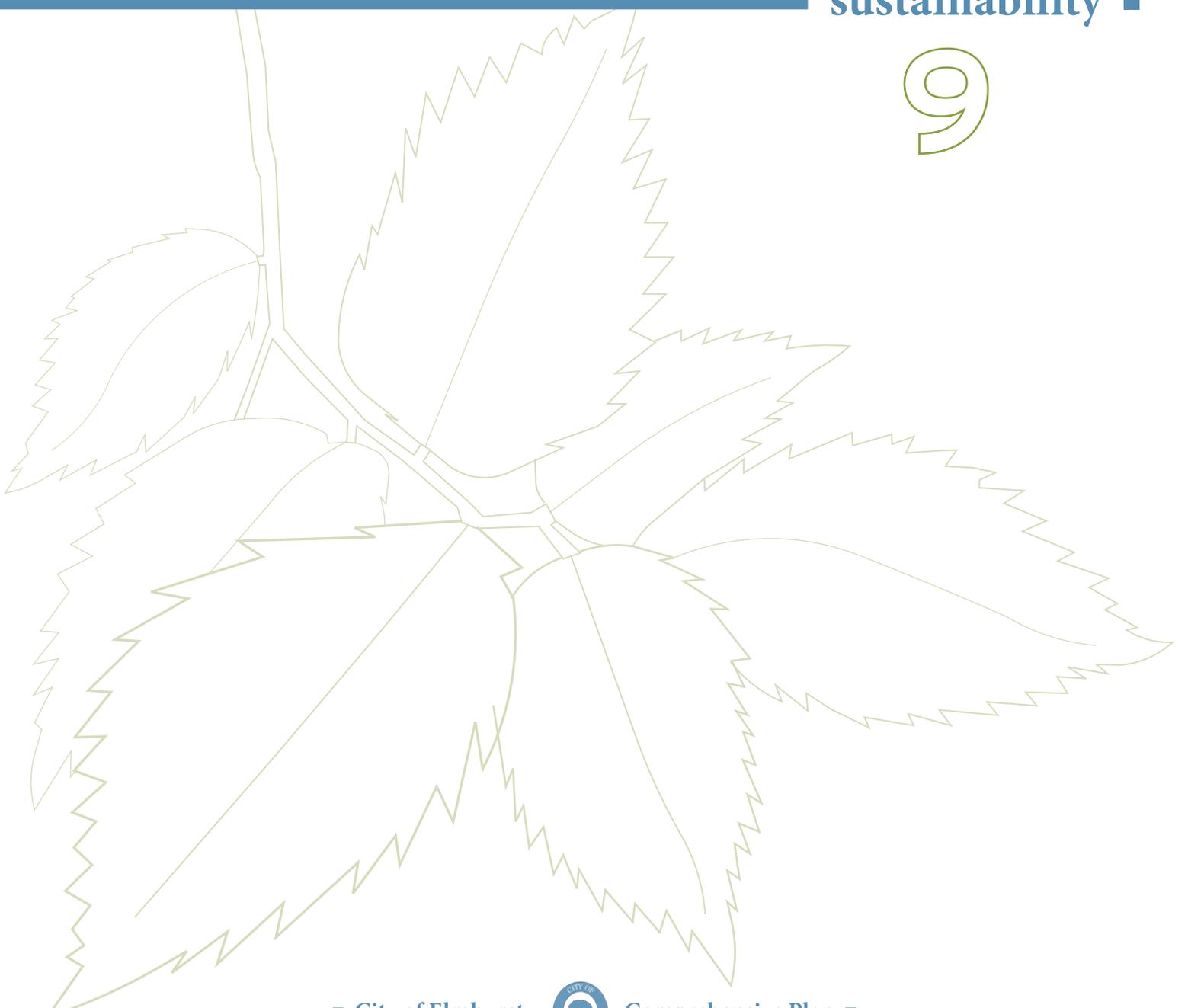
Capital Needs

To assist the Elmhurst Park District in maintaining quality park and trail facilities (beyond the level at which they are already quite capable) the City may be able to seek alternative funding sources such as State grants to assist in the funding of future recreational facilities, improved signage, or maintenance of existing regional trails. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) offers Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grants to assist in acquiring adjacent land should the Elmhurst Park District or Forest Preserve District wish to expand geographically in the future. Other funding sources for recreational amenities can include rental fees (such as the Weddings in Wilder Park program), donations and volunteer efforts, foundations and public/private partnerships will maximize resources. Continued cooperation with entities such as the school district, local athletic clubs, and Elmhurst College are important. [Policy 3]



Sustainability
■ sustainability ■

9





SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is achieved by meeting the needs of the present while protecting resources for future generations. To date, the City of Elmhurst has participated in a number of sustainability efforts, including signing the “Climate Protection Agreement,” joining the Sierra Club “Cool Cities” coalition¹, becoming a member of the ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability², and staging a Green Fest in Wilder Park to raise awareness of environmental issues.

A city-wide sustainability plan takes careful account of the diverse components that affect the quality of the city’s environmental condition, ranging from implementing a recycling and composting program to encouraging compact land use patterns. As a result, developing a sustainability plan requires taking a long view that goes beyond the timeframe that many comprehensive plans traditionally address. Efforts to achieve City-wide sustainability can be organized into the following broad categories: sustainable design, sustainable management practices, and municipal and private programs for achieving sustainability.

This chapter on sustainability produces a set of goals and objectives for maintaining and improving environmentally-friendly practices in Elmhurst. It should be emphasized that this plan presents general goals and policies for sustainability; it is not intended to substitute more detailed planning and programming which should be undertaken by individual municipal departments. Additionally, because sustainability strategies and available technologies are constantly evolving, the recommendations in this chapter should be continually revisited and revised to capture specific policies, topics, and action plans relating to municipal sustainability as they are identified, agreed to, and developed with appropriate public input.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Develop land use policies, programs and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability in Elmhurst.

¹ “Cool Cities” are cities that have made a commitment to stopping global warming by signing the US Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement. See the Cool Cities website for information: <http://coolcities.us/>

² ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. See their website for more information: <http://www.iclei.org>



Solar Panels provide energy.



Greenroofs help reduce runoff and keep buildings cooler.

Objectives:

1. Encourage a mix of location, land uses, and densities designed to increase accessibility for Elmhurst residents to services, recreation, jobs, housing, and mass transportation.
2. Assess the risks and potential impacts of climate change on City government operations and the greater Elmhurst community; reduce the urban heat island by reducing paved surfaces.
3. Establish targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and promoting sustainability for Elmhurst. Regularly assess progress and program needs, identifying opportunities and obstacles for meeting set GHG emission targets.



Goal 2: Develop transportation policies, programs, and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability.

Objectives:

1. Take actions to reduce the use of fuel and energy consumed in transportation, and encourage alternate forms of transportation—supported by accessible transportation facilities throughout the community.
2. Promote seamless transportation linkages between Elmhurst and the greater Chicagoland region.
3. Promote a healthy community by planning for and implementing a connected system of walkways and bikeways which will provide alternative forms of transportation while also encouraging recreation, exercise, and exposure to the natural environment.

Goal 3: Where possible, employ the seamless integration of the most effective energy conserving and carbon emission-reducing technologies into all municipal functions.

Objectives:

1. Encourage utility companies to consider solar power and other renewable resources when planning for future infrastructure services in Elmhurst.
2. Maintain existing utility systems while seeking to expand the use of alternative energy and sustainable maintenance and building practices in City facilities.
3. Seek new sources of revenue and expertise to be utilized in the provision of sustainable or “green” municipal services. This could include supporting the use of waste-to-energy technologies such as the direct potable reuse of water or groundwater replenishment.³
4. Evaluate opportunities to increase pump efficiency in water and wastewater systems; recover waste water treatment methane for energy production.

Goal 4: Develop economic development policies and programs designed to support and promote sustainability.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the co-location of jobs with housing in the City; seek to expand residents’ ability to work in close proximity to their homes.
2. Encourage and support home-based work and business activities that supplement traditional business and employment considerations.

Goal 5: Develop housing policies, programs and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability. En-

³ Philip S. Wenz, *Spigot to Spigot*, Planning Magazine, August/September 2008, page 6.



Biking is a sustainable transportation choice.

courage all City residents to adopt sustainable and “green” practices in their own homes or place of business.

Objectives:

1. Encourage availability of small scale energy production systems for commercial and residential structures (i.e. windmills and solar panels) to a variety of income levels.
2. Support and encourage a mix of housing types and styles which provide residents with affordable housing choices geared to changes in lifestyle that are more economical to both heat and cool.
3. Provide incentives in the development review phase that encourage renovations and new developments to incorporate energy saving features (utilizing the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design [LEED] standards) and employ compact neighborhood development (utilizing the LEED-ND standards).
4. Increase the rate of curbside recycling in the City.
5. Invest in public access to information, specifically for education on sustainable or “green” practices. This could include personal computers with Internet access at libraries, neighborhood community centers, and kiosks in key locations scattered throughout the City.
6. Develop cultural and recreational programs designed to support, promote, and raise awareness of sustainability. This includes events such as Green Fest, which took place in Wilder Park in August of 2008.



Goal 6: Implement sustainable practices and make environmentally-conscious sustainable choices at the municipal level.

Objectives:

1. Support and continue to improve the energy efficiency of all City-owned buildings in order to meet or exceed LEED energy standards for building design.
2. Invest in internal municipal practices designed to reduce reliance on energy consumption as well as reduce waste and excessive carbon emissions.
3. Make energy efficiency a priority through building code improvements, the retrofitting of City facilities with energy efficient lighting, and a coordinated campaign urging employees to conserve energy, resources, and money.
4. Exclusively purchase Energy-Star rated equipment and appliances for City use.
5. Increase the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles; reduce the number of vehicles; launch an employee education program including anti-engine idling messages and, where possible, convert diesel vehicles to bio-diesel.

Policies

The following policies provide a framework for guiding the creation and implementation of sustainability strategies.

1. Work with public and private partners to develop strategies and programs to prepare for and mitigate the potential impacts of climate change. Develop mitigation strategies that address land use, which can be used by both public and private actors to help ease the potential impacts of development in the City.
2. Work to provide transportation alternatives to Elmhurst residents and commuters in order to reduce the amount of overall carbon emissions generated in Elmhurst. This includes the use of hybrid vehicles, alternative fuels mass transportation (van shuttles, bus, and train), bicycle and pedestrian pathways, and the facilitation of private carpools. Seek partnerships from transportation service providers (i.e. Pace, Metra) and other alternative transportation organizations.
3. Work to promote energy conservation and innovative energy sourcing in Elmhurst.
4. Use economic development techniques to reduce unnecessary commuting and excessive GHG emissions.
5. Provide incentives to encourage Elmhurst residents to adopt sustainable practices in their individual homes.
6. Initiate actions to adopt sustainable practices for internal municipal facilities and functions.

7. Reduce excessive runoff from non-permeable surfaces and protect groundwater from contamination by employing a variety of techniques to implement sustainable practices that conserve water and energy as much as possible.



Permeable pavers allow water to filter, thus reducing storm water runoff.



GREEN BUILDING DESIGN AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Green building techniques are practices that conserve energy, water, materials, land area, and divert construction materials from land disposal areas through recycling and reuse. Sustainable, environmentally compatible design of this nature can be achieved by employing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building standards and rating systems. These green building techniques, which specify the use of energy efficient insulation, fixtures, lighting and state-of-the-art strategies for water savings and material selection serve to ensure that best practices in both building construction and maintenance are utilized. Additionally, promoting the use of green building practices includes the preservation of existing structures where feasible and the reuse and recycling of materials from deconstructed buildings.

The City of Elmhurst should require a green building or LEED review of proposed development projects in the permitting stage to make certain that the most sustainable or “green” construction choices are employed in new development wherever possible. A quantifiable “green permitting”



system should be developed to provide those applying for permits a clear and easy to understand guide to the requirements for meeting green building (or LEED) standards, as well as permit fee reductions. In developing a green building program, the City of Elmhurst should consider and identify minimum requirements that must be met and incentives for exceeding those requirements. A successful program will offer property owners flexibility and options in determining which materials and techniques best meet their needs and desires for complying with the green standards.

In addition to energy efficient buildings, reducing overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for residents will go a long way toward making Elmhurst more sustainable and significantly reducing the City's carbon footprint. Strategies for this include viable public transit options, overall compact neighborhood design, and responsible land use decisions (discussed further in the next subsection). Design principles and policies that affect this should be fostered and implemented. These include a variety of action items, which range from constructing dense transit-oriented housing developments to identifying appropriate areas within the City for local food production, processing and distribution powered by alternative energy.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make Elmhurst more sustainable, the City must become increasingly more walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented. For example, a solo commuter switching his or her commute to existing public transportation in a single day can reduce their CO₂ emissions by 20 pounds (this is slightly more than two metric tons annually or a 10 percent reduction of an average two car household's carbon footprint).⁴ Other options include:

- New or reconfigured streets should be designed with bicycles and pedestrians in mind.
- Street congestion should be eased with Context Sensitive Designs.
- Public transportation options in Elmhurst, such as Pace and Metra, should continue to operate in a clean, safe and accessible manner and be expanded to provide

⁴ For comparison, weatherizing a home and adjusting the thermostat yields carbon savings of 2,800 pounds of CO₂ per year and replacing five incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent lamps saves 445 pounds of CO₂ annually. See American Public Transportation Association, Public Transportation's Contribution to Greenhouse Gas Reduction, September 2007, Online: http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/climate_change.cfm



Bike to Bus transfer.

vide additional connections within and outside of the community.

- Secure bicycle parking should be made available near any major City destinations to encourage ridership.
- Priority parking should be made available in all commercial and municipal building lots for carpoolers and vehicles using alternative fuels.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PROVISION

Alternative, or renewable, energy sources show promise in helping to reduce the amount of carbon emissions that are by-products of energy use or generation. Employing alternative energy sources reduce the carbon emissions that contribute to climate change and helps to preserve many of the finite natural resources (such as fossil fuels) that are heavily relied upon as sources of energy today. Because greenhouse gas emissions from energy production (including transportation) amount to nearly 70 percent of world wide greenhouse gas emissions, providing incentives to switch to a low-carbon economy is paramount. These incentives can include large scale solutions such as the commodity-based green energy certificates (i.e. Carbon Financial Instrument contracts, traded at the Chicago Climate Exchange) or renewable energy portfolio standards



for states and cities which stipulate that a certain amount of energy provided must come from an alternative source.⁵

Options for renewable, sustainable, alternative sources for energy provision should be examined in Elmhurst; examples include: solar power, vegetable oil and bio diesel, land-fill gas generation, hydro and wind power. Often, it is less cost-effective for individual homeowners or small business operators to install alternative energy systems due to large up-front energy costs. To correct this, incentives for installation of small-scale renewable energy generators (such as solar panels on a home) should be offered. These may include a per-watt rebate for installed electrical capacity at the place of home or business, loans or grants for installation, and 'net metering' wherein the property owner is paid for any excess electricity generated and fed back into the grid.⁶

Building codes and design guidelines should allow for, encourage or require integration of passive solar design, green roofs, active solar elements (such as roof panels) and other renewable energy sources. Design standards might include southern orientation of structures for maximum solar exposure, extensive southern fenestration for winter heating, shielding of windows to prevent summer overheating, proper thermal mass to retain heat and coolness and the installation of solar hot water heaters.⁷ Current zoning and development standards in Elmhurst should be revised to eliminate any provisions that could potentially act as a barrier to the use or installation of residential renewable energy systems.



STORMWATER AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Thoughtful choices in both landscape design and stormwater management can contribute significantly to the sustainability of an urban system. On-site stormwater practices can increase infiltration, retention or detention of stormwater, resulting in the reduction of the volume of water leaving the property. Controlling and reducing the amount of runoff from the site can, in turn, reduce the risk of flooding and the incidence of combined sewer overflow events, as well as reduce the size and extent of drainage infrastructure required. Retention and detention systems may also

⁵ American Planning Association, *Policy Guide on Planning and Climate Change*, April 2008, page 39.

⁶ American Planning Association, page 39.

⁷ American Planning Association, page 39.

decrease overall water consumption as collected rainwater can be reused on-site. Listed below are highlights of current best management practices, many of which could be successfully implemented in Elmhurst:

- **Run-off Reduction Practices**
 - Reduce quantity of impervious surface material
 - Utilize permeable pavements
 - Provide vegetated buffers for runoff; this improves filtration and infiltration of contaminated water, and slows runoff speed back into the ground.
 - Reduce sources of erosion in drainage ways, streams and disturbed ground.
 - Use creative landscaping (vegetation) to most effectively absorb stormwater runoff, such as a planted swale or rain garden.
 - Provide best management practices compatible with existing land uses, (especially with nearby industrial and commercial uses present) for areas that are in floodplains or waterways. This includes landscaped curb extensions or the construction of bioswales.
- **Sustainable Landscaping and Planting Practices**
 - Choose plants thoughtfully for the appropriate conditions (i.e. urban, park, or median) and provide reasonable vegetation maintenance. If herbicides or pesticides are required, be sparing in the application of them.
 - Create landscapes with an analysis of cultural plant needs in mind; group similar plants together by need.
 - Plant landscapes that are suitable to the level of maintenance that will be provided.
 - Consider 'hydrozoning' or planting and restoring native prairie plants in areas where lawn is not necessary, these plants require no mowing and significantly less (if any) supplemental irrigation.
 - Irrigation should not be excessively relied upon to maintain plantings. Where possible, employ best practices of irrigation design and management such as the use of 'grey' or reclaimed water.
 - Provide good quality (or structural) soil for plants to enhance longevity.
 - To reduce costly mowing, reduce non-essential vegetated surface areas that require mowing.
 - Provide turf in appropriate areas. Irrigate, if required, in areas such as high-use sport fields. Mow turf high enough so that the grass can hold moisture rather than 'browning out.'
 - Codify the above practices and landscape values in the City ordinance.





Vegetated Swale reduces impervious surface..



A swale absorbs rainwater, thus reducing storm water runoff.



IMPLEMENTATION

There are a number of strategies and resources available to pursue sustainability City-wide. Any approach must include intergovernmental cooperation of neighboring communities and a partnership with county-wide efforts to 'go green.' In addition to this, the City should implement a comprehensive City-sponsored education program to provide information and technical assistance to the public for any associated sustainability efforts. Policy numbers at the end of each implementation action correspond with the policies stated at the outset of the chapter.



Landscaped curb bump-outs capture runoff.

Assessment and Progress

Elmhurst should develop a strategic plan that will help guide and focus City resources and program initiatives to (1) reduce carbon emissions and the carbon footprint of the City government and Elmhurst community, and, (2) reduce and minimize the potential risks of climate change. The strategic plan should be coordinated with and leverage state and regional goals for emissions reductions, but Elmhurst should look for a take the lead where unique opportunities to innovate present themselves. For example, the City must inventory and monitor Elmhurst's greenhouse gas emissions in order to establish a carbon footprint baseline. Establishing baselines and monitoring programs is essential to measure and track progress in emission reductions over time. These baseline measurements should be established both for the city government, as an exemplary actor, and for the community as a whole. Over time, the City should develop and annually report on of a set of "sustainability indicators" that can be used to track Elmhurst's progress in meeting its sustainability goals over the course of the next decade. Examples of this include: quantity and quality of potable water, degree of compact urban development and "walkable neighborhoods" within Elmhurst, number of transportation alternatives to private vehicles, and the supply and quantity of alternative energy sources. [Policy 1]



Alternative Transportation Options

In order to implement alternative transportation options, an appropriate infrastructure in Elmhurst must be provided to make “green transportation” a viable alternative. Consider the following incentives: preferential parking locations for alternate-fueled vehicles, installation of electrical charging stations at public and commercial parking garages for electric-powered vehicles, conversion of public transit vehicles to electric or battery powered vehicles that can be recharged by electric power, and a large network of pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout the community that link all neighborhoods. On the municipal side, the City of Elmhurst and Elmhurst School District #205 should work to convert public and privately-owned and operated buses from fossil-fuel powered to electric or hybrid powered vehicles. [Policy 2]

Alternative Energy and Energy Conservation

In order to integrate alternative energy use, Elmhurst should implement the institution of a City-wide ‘green pricing’ utility program. Such programs allow for individual consumers to elect to use renewable forms of energy (such as wind power) for a fixed cost over a defined time period, which provides the City with enough consumer demand to diversify its energy portfolio; thereby increasing the percentage of power supplied to the City from renewable sources. Under the Power Agency Act, ComEd (the chief utility provider for the majority of northern Illinois) is required to provide incentive programs to its customers. In the next year, the company is expected to introduce four incentive programs to encourage the development of energy efficient buildings. The first provides rebates to developers and owners that select energy efficient equipment when retrofitting building systems; the second is a smaller scale version of the first with the rebates designed for smaller HVAC systems wherein ComEd will furnish up to 50 percent of the cost of an energy audit in addition to providing a rebate after the equipment is installed. The third and fourth stages of the program build off of the first two, with progressively more assistance provided in the energy audit stage, or in pre-construction and design services phase for new structures.⁸ Large institutions, such as Elmhurst Memorial Hospital, would be wise to take advantage of this region-wide program for maximum energy efficiency and reduced utility rates. [Policy 3]

Compact Neighborhood Development

Economic development strategies for improving the jobs-

⁸ Warner and Bateman, *Expanded Incentive Programs for Green Development to go into Effect June 1st*, Freeborn & Peters LLP, page 2-4.



Sidewalk recycling center

to-housing balance in Elmhurst can also have an effect on sustainability of the City. Potential homeowners can take advantage of Location Efficient Mortgages that can allow them to purchase a home closer to public transit. Location efficient communities are defined as convenient neighborhoods in which residents can walk from their homes to stores, schools, recreation, and public transportation. People who live in location efficient communities have less need to drive, which allows them to save money and improve the environment by reducing their overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT).⁹ Furthermore, the addition of strategically sited urban street trees in a location efficient neighborhood not only improve property values of nearby homes but serve to help cool the streets, acting as excellent ‘carbon sinks’ that work to offset the deleterious effects of carbon emissions. Elmhurst should continue to cluster transit, residential and employment locations in an efficient manner to encourage compact development and a walkable community. [Policy 4]

Funding

Monetary resources available to implement sustainability practices include federal, state and regional grants such as the federally administered Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program and the Environmental Protection Agency’s bid to provide technical assistance to communities that have enforced the U.S. Conference of Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement.¹⁰ A recent expansion of the Illinois Green Power Agency Act is designed to provide for

⁹ See more about LEM Online: <http://www.locationefficiency.com/>

¹⁰ See League of Women Voters Summary, Natural Resources, Online: http://www.lwvil.org/WWS_NR1_Background.pdf



a new range of expanded, grants, rebates and discounts for owners and developers of residential, commercial and industrial properties.¹¹ Grants are also available from a wide variety of private sources such as the Conservation 2000 Ecosystems Program which rewards land owners for innovative land management and stormwater techniques, and the Compton Foundation that provides assistance to citizens addressing climate change. [Policies 1, 3, 5, 6]

Elmhurst can help citizens to become more sustainable by encouraging citizens to change their everyday habits. Providing financial incentives or programs make it easier to decrease an individual's adverse environmental impact. These strategies include: improving personal use of solar power, using energy efficiently by properly weatherizing residential homes, encouraging sustainable power utility choices for customers, taking advantage of waste reduction or recycling improvements (such as limiting trash pickup with a charge by volume scheme) offering curbside recycling or yard waste composting pickup programs, and raising awareness and educating the public on the great impact that individual actions (such as home composting or switching to compact florescent light bulbs) can have on the sustainability of the City. [Policy 5]

On-site and broader scale implementation programs for municipal and private actors include: using incentives and energy tax rebates to encourage solar power installations on residential rooftops, providing technical and financial assistance for home weatherization, and providing resources to citizens for reflective roof painting to decrease the effect of the urban heat island. Since 1988, the State of Illinois has promoted energy efficient housing as means of maintaining the affordability of the housing stock. Under the Illinois Energy Efficient Affordable Housing Construction Program, grants have been provided to non-profit housing developers that agreed to include energy efficient building equipment and materials in the rehab or construction of affordable housing. In 2008, this program has been expanded to for-profit affordable housing developers as well.¹² Any new affordable housing construction in Elmhurst should work to take advantage of this incentive. [Policy 5]

Sustainable Management Practices

Productive and environmentally conscious management efforts can take on many forms but are perhaps best illustrated at the municipal level, by the "greening" of internal department operations. Efforts include: the construction and retrofitting of municipal buildings to conform to LEED standards, increased attention to mitigating the urban heat



Electric vehicle charging station

island effect with green roofs and sufficient urban forestry, and using alternative fuels in City vehicle fleets. Implementation initiatives for such practices include: introducing hybrid police cars, garbage trucks and municipal service vehicles to the City's fleet, and installing reflective paving and "cool" roofs" (both reflective and garden) on top of City-owned buildings that will serve to insulate the indoor ambient air temperature of the buildings, thus reducing heating and cooling costs for the City. [Policy 6]

Developing and enforcing City programs that foster sustainable environmental choices for both City employees and residents that reduce runoff is beneficial. For example, the installation of rain gardens, water collection barrels, and other landscape-based drainage features such as permeable pavement and landscaped curb extensions help to absorb and filter pollutants from stormwater. [Policy 7]

Continuing Education

Education is of the lowest cost, easiest to implement and highest impact strategy that Elmhurst can pursue. Greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced and prevented by nearly 10 percent in some communities just through slight behavior modification, such as turning out the lights when not in use. The City of Elmhurst's unique role in providing energy to businesses and residents and in establishing long range land use and public policy, make it especially well poised to take significant strides in establishing a sustainable Elmhurst, that will be well preserved and resource rich for many generations to come.

¹¹ Warner and Bateman, page 1.

¹² Warner and Bateman, page 4.

