

City Of Rolling Meadows **SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2023**





Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan

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Rolling Meadows

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Contents

1.	Background on Sustainability Planning	4
1.1.	What is Sustainability?.....	5
2.	The Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan	6
2.1.	Formulation of the Sustainability Plan.....	8
2.2.	Structure of the Sustainability Plan.....	9
3.	Goals and Strategies	10
3.1.	(C) - Climate	11
3.1.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Climate	12
3.1.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Climate	13
3.2.	(ED) - Economic Development.....	15
3.2.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Economic Development	15
3.2.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Economic Development.....	16
3.3.	(E) - Energy	17
3.3.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Energy.....	17
3.3.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Energy	18
3.4.	(L) - Land.....	21
3.4.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Land	22
3.4.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Land	23
3.5.	(LP) - Leadership.....	26
3.5.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Leadership	26
3.5.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Leadership.....	27
3.6.	(M) - Mobility.....	28
3.6.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Mobility	28
3.6.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Mobility	29
3.7.	(MO) - Municipal Operations	33
3.7.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Municipal Operations	33
3.7.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Municipal Operations.....	33
3.8.	(SC) - Sustainable Communities.....	35
3.8.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Communities.....	35
3.8.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Communities	36
3.9.	(WR) - Waste & Recycling	38
3.9.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Waste & Recycling	38
3.9.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Waste & Recycling.....	39
3.10.	(W) - Water and Stormwater	41
3.10.1.	GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Water.....	43
3.10.2.	City Strategies for Sustainable Water	44
4.	Roles and Responsibilities	46
5.	Conclusion.....	48
6.	Appendix A – Strategy Summary Matrix.....	49



1. Background on Sustainability Planning

On April 23, 2019, the City of Rolling Meadows adopted the *Rolling Meadows Comprehensive Plan*, a plan aimed at guiding the community's vision for physical, social, and economic development. Created with extensive community input, the Comprehensive Plan presents a vision for the future built around five key priorities:

Sense of Place: Rolling Meadows offers a distinct character, quality housing stock, and comfortable quality of life with a “small town” feel.

People: Residents, businesses, and government bodies communicate and work collaboratively across jurisdictions to achieve shared goals.

A Great Place to Be: Rolling Meadows embraces its position as being in the center of regional destinations and focuses economic development efforts around existing location advantages.

Getting Around: Residents and visitors have smooth access to a connected, efficient transportation network that facilitates mobility and accessibility for all.

Environment & Infrastructure: Rolling Meadows has adequate infrastructure to manage stormwater and limit flooding, and Salt Creek is maintained as an amenity for all.

The *Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan* extends and implements the City's Comprehensive Plan to provide the City of Rolling Meadows, its businesses, and its citizens a roadmap to achieve environmental sustainability and sustainable development.

1.1. What is Sustainability?

The concepts of *sustainability* grew out of a global concern for the long-term health and well-being of our natural and built environments. The history of natural resource management, fossil fuel use, food production, urbanization, industrialization, deforestation, and land management led many to question the long-term sustainability of our planet, lifestyle, and especially the life-sustaining natural environment. The rising demands of a growing world population have created unsustainable economic development resulting in water contamination, global warming, poor air quality, and loss of biodiversity.

While there are many working definitions of sustainability, one of the first – and best known – originates from a 1987 United Nations report by the World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*. It defines sustainability as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainability is also commonly defined as the intersection or balancing of three values (the “Three Es”) in decision-making: **Environment**, **Economy**, and social **Equity**. Sustainable actions and plans promote these three values collectively, rather than dealing with each value in isolation or promoting one value at the expense of another. In a sustainable world, the dignity and respect we show to each other increases our respect for nature and our environment and increases our quality of life.





2. The Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan

While the City of Rolling Meadows will not solve worldwide issues, our work, and the work of communities across the globe can contribute to achieving many of these goals. The *Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan* aims to establish a guide toward a sustainable community through action across a diverse set of topics and actors.

The *Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan* aligns with and extends a set of broader sustainability goals established by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC), a membership organization of the Chicago region's 275 cities, towns, and villages. The Environmental Committee of the Caucus developed the [Greenest Region Compact \(GRC\)](#) aimed at providing a framework for the member communities to develop and align their own sustainability plans. GRC2, the second version of the GRC, was launched in March of 2016 and adopted by the City on April 11, 2017.

The [Greenest Region Compact \(GRC\)](#) leverages the strength of municipal governments to build vibrant, sustainable communities across the Chicago region. The foundation of the GRC is 49 high-level goals organized into 10 categories that together represent the consensus of participating Caucus members. The goals are aligned with important local, regional, national, and global goals and are broadly supported by municipal members of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and allied organizations. These consensus goals guide municipal actions, support mayors in their role as environmental leaders, and foster collaborations that have positive impacts on sustainability in the region.

The 10 sustainability categories defined in the GRC2 are:

1. Climate

Providing a strategy to address climate change resulting from greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Economic Development

Encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable approaches to commerce. Supporting a “green economy” and supporting businesses which develop products and services which promote environmental improvement.

3. Energy

Promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and community engagement on energy practices.

4. Land

Cultivating conservation-minded development, natural landscapes, green spaces, wildlife habitat, and re-forestation.

5. Leadership

Becoming leaders in public policy development and implementation which supports a sustainable community.

6. Mobility

Developing infrastructure which encourages sustainable transportation choices, decreases the environmental impact of transportation, and maintains safety as a priority.

7. Municipal Operations

Demonstrating sustainable practices in all municipal operations. Develop and maintain metrics on progress toward sustainability goals.

8. Sustainable Communities

Promoting a culture of sustainable living through education, events, and policies.

9. Water and Stormwater

Promoting sustainable management of natural water resources. Protecting our natural water environment and wetlands.

10. Waste & Recycling

Developing and promoting sustainable waste management, recycling, and product reuse.



2.1. Formulation of the Sustainability Plan



The preparation of the Sustainability Plan was a volunteer-led initiative over the course of 30 months following the formal establishment of the City's previously *ad hoc* Environmental Committee in 2021. The Committee's approach in drafting this Plan was to rely on the GRC2 Framework as an authoritative source of goals, objectives, and strategies appropriate to the City.

The Committee focused first on identifying the City's current level of implementation of the 421 different strategies that form the Framework. The assessment was completed in approximately December 2022.

During 2023, the Committee prioritized policy steps from the Framework for implementation based on factors such as the City's current progress, any needs and benefits that were unique to the City, and the relative difficulty and costs of each policy to attain within the City. Meetings of the Committee were open to the public and advertised to stakeholder and community groups. At the conclusion of the Committee's review process, its recommendations were referred to the City Council and adopted as a City policy document in the form of this Plan.

The Plan assumes approximately a four-year time horizon before the next major update or revision cycle begins. During that time, the City should report to the community yearly on its progress in implementation. Concurrently with this annual update, the Environmental Committee should adopt an annual work plan to ensure progress and promote alignment between implementation efforts by the City and community stakeholders. Additional information about the responsible parties for the implementation of this Plan is provided in [Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities](#).

Since the GRC2 framework was launched in March 2016, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus completed its 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region. This plan is more focused on climate-specific policies as well as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. As this Plan was already being formulated, it does not incorporate the Climate Action Plan. The MMC will update or extend the GRC2 Framework to incorporate elements of the Climate Action Plan in the coming years. The next major revision of this Plan should include additional policies that align to either the 2021 Climate Action Plan or, if ready, the newest version of the GRC Framework.

2.2. Structure of the Sustainability Plan

The Sustainability Plan is organized into 10 Sections, one for each category defined in the GRC2 Framework. The Sections are presented in alphabetical order and are of equal importance.

Each Section includes a brief topical **Description** summarizing why the goal area is important to Rolling Meadows; a list of the GRC2's **Goals** applicable to both Rolling Meadows and the Section (in no specific order); and a list of **Strategies** that Rolling Meadows has or will implement in pursuit of these goals. Some sections also include a **Spotlight** that highlights important current activities in the community to achieve community sustainability.

The Strategies are primarily drawn from the most actionable strategies within the GRC2 Framework but may synthesize multiple strategies as one or include unique local initiatives. The numbering system is internal to the Sustainability Plan and does not follow the similar numbering system used by the GRC2. The Strategies are organized into three categories based on time horizon:

“Attained” Strategies are those where the City believes it has met at least the minimum requirements for implementation; further implementation of an “attained” strategy may, or may not, be the subject of future work plans. Strategies marked as “attained” at the time of this Plan’s adoption are not included in measuring implementation progress.

“Short-term” Strategies are those that the City evaluated it would be able to implement within no more than 18 months after implementation began. Because of the number of these strategies in this category, it will take longer than 18 months to implement *all* these policies. However, the City believes that it is reasonable to attain all of these short-term strategies before the Plan’s next revision if there are no substantial additions to or alterations of the City’s sustainability agenda.

Each short-term strategy includes an evaluation of its **Significance**, its **Difficulty** to implement, and some include notes on possible **Actions** for implementation. The evaluations are presented as **High**, **Moderate**, or **Low** and have been calibrated so that approximately one-third of the short-term goals throughout the plan fall into each category. Goals are generally ordered first by their Significance evaluation, and second by their Difficulty evaluation.

“Long-term” Strategies include both those that the City identified it was “interested in pursuing” with no specific timeframe assigned, as well as those strategies that by their nature are aspirational, open-ended, or impractical to measure compared to the desired outcome. These strategies are presented with limited or no more information and are presented in no specific order.

Omitted GRC2 Strategies: Strategies from the GRC2 framework that the City scored as “not planned” for implementation or are “not relevant” to the City at the time of evaluation are not included in this document. Additionally, some GRC2 strategies have been combined or synthesized into a single item for the purposes of this Plan.

Cross-listed Strategies: Strategies are generally only presented in one goal area, but certain strategies are cross-listed in multiple areas. “Attained” strategies are simply repeated. “Short-term” and “long-term” strategies are notated with any other goal numbers to avoid misreporting.



3. Goals and Strategies

Climate

(C) Rolling Meadows must join the Chicago region as well as cities, businesses, and organizations throughout the world in halting the emission of greenhouse gases in order to mitigate or avoid the effects of climate change.¹ The Chicago region has already experienced a faster rate of climate change than either the world or the United States as a whole, including changes in temperature, precipitation levels, and the severity of storms. The [2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region](#) identifies electrifying transportation, optimizing building energy, and enacting clean energy projects as the greatest opportunities to reduce GHG emissions in our region.

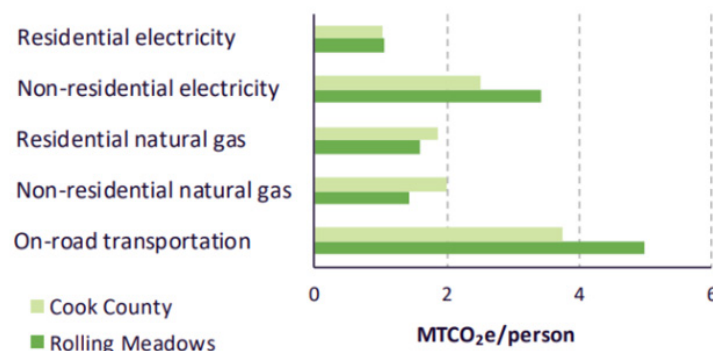
CMAP's [most recent municipal-level emissions summary](#) (data from 2019, released in 2023) provides an estimate of the City's aggregate and per capita contributions to regional GHG emissions. Rolling Meadows is generally comparable to its peers throughout Cook County, but it generates proportionally larger shares of emissions attributable to (1) its business sector as well as (2) on-road transportation (passenger and commercial). Overall, on-road transportation demands are the largest single contributing category to the City's carbon emissions footprint.

Many Sections within this Plan will reduce the City's GHG emissions footprint if implemented. The Strategies in this **Climate** Section are primarily those that are specific and exclusive to the topics of air quality and climate change, such as measurement, goal setting, adaptation, and resilience. The next version of the GRC Framework is anticipated to incorporate more climate-specific Strategies for adoption by the City during the next revision of this Plan.

Goals for Sustainable Climate

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Air Quality.** Maintain clean and healthful air.
- **Resiliency.** Develop resiliency to climate change impacts.
- **Education and Outreach.** Engage the community in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2019 per capita emissions



1. Much of the information presented in this paragraph is adapted from the [2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region](#), published by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, NOAA, and the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit.

City Strategies for Sustainable Climate

Attained

- ✓ Rolling Meadows coordinates its climate resiliency efforts with federal, state, and regional planning agencies.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted the Cook County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJ-HMP), which addresses all known natural hazards and includes an annex specific to Rolling Meadows.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted a Tree Preservation ordinance and commercial landscaping standards to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted a ban on coal tar-based sealants to reduce the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOC) from public and private pavement maintenance.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows regulates the burning of landscape waste.





Short Term

C-1. Rolling Meadows will establish one or more greenhouse gas emissions targets.

Significance: High | Difficulty: High

CMAP's ON TO 2050 plan identifies that, to align with the Paris Agreement, the Chicago region must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% relative to 2005 levels by 2050, which requires emission reductions of approximately 5% annually. Rolling Meadows can establish targets for greenhouse gas emissions, which may be broad or focused on sectors such as the City's own operations, heating, electricity use, or transportation. The City's ability to measure progress towards targets will depend on regional estimates performed periodically by CMAP.

C-2. Rolling Meadows will assess threats from extreme weather events.

Significance: High | Difficulty: High

CMAP's [Climate Adaptation Guidebook for Municipalities in the Chicago Region](#) suggests the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's [Self-Assessment to Address Climate Change Readiness in Your Community](#) as one approach to conducting a local vulnerability assessment that would satisfy this Strategy. The Guidebook also includes a regional assessment of impacts that would help the City's local assessment.

C-3. Rolling Meadows will explore options for local air monitoring.

Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Moderate

The proximity of O'Hare International Airport and the bisection of Rolling Meadows by Illinois Route 53 and Interstate 90 mean that the City is more exposed to the air quality consequences of these facilities. Tools such as the U.S. EPA's [EJScreen](#) and [AirToxScreen](#) provide high-level estimates of air quality risks. The advent of the "Internet of Things" (IOT) makes it more practical and less expensive for the City to monitor common air quality indicators like particulate matter (PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀).

C-4. Rolling Meadows will reduce the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOC) from its municipal operations.

Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low

The City can purchase cleaning products, paints, and other materials that are formulated to reduce VOC emissions.

C-5. Rolling Meadows will educate the public about climate change.

Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low

The City can use its existing communications channels, such as the monthly newsletter and social media, to provide information about climate change to the public. The City may also partner with other community groups to this end. These climate-specific communications can highlight stormwater challenges in our region arising from climate change (see [Water](#) section) as well as progress towards the implementation of this Plan.



Long Term

C-6. Rolling Meadows will join the Compact of Mayors.

“The ICLEI Compact of Mayors is an agreement by city networks – and then by their members – to undertake a transparent and supportive approach to reduce city-level emissions, to reduce vulnerability and to enhance resilience to climate change, in a consistent and complimentary manner to national level climate protection.”

C-7. Rolling Meadows will inform the community about potentially hazardous air quality index (AQI) forecasts and Air Pollution Action Days.

The air quality index (AQI) is a 1-500 scale that summarizes the levels of the five major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Levels above 100 are where sensitive individuals (such as individuals with respiratory or pulmonary disorders) may begin to experience negative health effects. The Illinois EPA announces Air Pollution Action Days when AQI levels are forecast to be above 100 at multiple sites for multiple days.



Economic Development

(ED)

Economic development is a leading concern of the City as it works to remain relevant in a changing economy, create prosperity for its residents, and generate the activity that will fund critical infrastructure and public services.

Because of the external pressures of climate change, the economy will continue to shift and develop, and those companies – and communities – that provide environmentally sound and sustainable outputs will be poised to succeed. The policies in this ***Economic Development*** Section are centered on accenting the City’s existing economic development efforts and directing them so as to promote the recruitment of new businesses and evolution of existing businesses that are best prepared to succeed in a sustainable world.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Economic Development

- **Workforce Development & Innovation.** Promote innovation and a competitive workforce.
- **Green Economy.** Cultivate local and sustainable development, jobs, and businesses.

City Strategies for Sustainable Economic Development

Short Term

- ED-1. Rolling Meadows will create and promote a community brand and tourism activities featuring the City's natural resources and cultural characteristics.

Significance: High | **Difficulty:** Moderate

At the time of adoption of this Plan, Rolling Meadows is about to begin a rebranding exercise that will better communicate the community's character and spirit. This branding exercise should consider and integrate the City's natural resources.

- ED-2. Rolling Meadows will attract and retain businesses that practice and promote sustainability.

Significance: Low | **Difficulty:** Moderate

As part of ongoing efforts to recruit and retain businesses in Rolling Meadows, the City should pay special attention to those establishments that are prepared to benefit from the "green" economy and that further build an ecosystem of innovative talent in the City.

- ED-3. Rolling Meadows will recognize and support businesses that promote sustainability.

Significance: Low | **Difficulty:** Low

As part of outgoing outreach to Rolling Meadows businesses, the City should identify, recognize, and support those businesses that are investing their resources into sustainability programs consistent with this Plan.

- ED-4. Rolling Meadows will promote local goods and services.

Significance: Low | **Difficulty:** Low

Rolling Meadows should use the opportunities provided by business, resident, and other outreach to highlight local goods and services that are produced or sold in Rolling Meadows.

Long Term

- ED-6. Rolling Meadows will encourage green innovation among residents and local businesses.

- ED-7. Rolling Meadows will advocate for new opportunities in the clean energy industry.

- ED-8. Rolling Meadows will connect local businesses with education, training, and jobs related to sustainability and advocate for the development of a "green" workforce.



Energy

The Northrup Grumman facilities in Rolling Meadows installed and operates the corporation's largest solar power generating system.

(E) As described in the [Climate](#) Section, optimizing building energy and enacting clean energy projects are among the greatest opportunities to reduce GHG emissions in our region. According to CMAP's [most recent municipal-level emissions summary](#) (data from 2019, released in 2023), non-residential electricity usage is the City's second-largest per capita contributor to GHG emissions. The Strategies in this **Energy** Section will improve the carbon emissions from the City's energy use by (1) using less energy overall through improvements to the efficiency of existing operations and (2) replacing polluting energy generation with renewable resources such as solar and wind production.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Energy

- **Energy Efficiency.** Use energy for buildings and facilities efficiently.
- **Renewable Energy.** Advance renewable energy.
- **Energy Management.** Reduce energy consumption.
- **Policy.** Enact policies that support clean energy.

City Strategies for Sustainable Energy

Attained

- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted the most recent version of the Illinois Energy Conservation Code (IECC).
- ✓ Rolling Meadows participates in the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Community Solar program to allow residents to purchase solar energy supply located within the ComEd region at favorable terms.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows allows for the installation of solar and wind energy systems "by right" without discretionary review processes (e.g. special use permits).
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has retrofit LEDs and smart sensors into its facilities and streetlight utilities to reduce energy consumption.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows businesses can access long-term financing for sustainability programs through C-PACE, the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program.





Short Term

- E-1. Rolling Meadows will pursue SolSmart recognition.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: High
Rolling Meadows can pursue certification through [SolSmart](#), a national program sponsored by the Department of Energy, to demonstrate that it has made the policy changes necessary to expedite solar deployment within Rolling Meadows.
- E-2. Rolling Meadows will evaluate procurement of additional renewable resources whenever it solicits proposals for community choice aggregation.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Low
Rolling Meadows operates an opt-out electricity aggregation program by referendum. Historically, Rolling Meadows has used its aggregation authority to pursue fixed price offers that reduce bills for residents and small businesses. Savings are becoming more difficult to capture as energy markets shift and become more volatile. Alternative uses of Rolling Meadows' aggregation authority may allow it to supply a greater mix of renewable energy resources attributable to Rolling Meadows' electricity usage (such as through Renewable Energy Certificates or RECs). This may be at an equal or greater cost than the least expensive supply contract available utilizing conventional (carbon-producing) energy sources.
- E-3. Rolling Meadows will evaluate procurement of renewable energy whenever it solicits electricity supply proposals for its own consumption.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Low
Rolling Meadows aggregates some of its own electricity supply with a third-party supplier through the [Northern Illinois Municipal Electric Cooperative](#) (NIMEC). Rolling Meadows should evaluate options to purchase Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) or to otherwise shift demand to renewable resources whenever it goes to market.
- E-4. Rolling Meadows will raise community awareness of energy efficiency programs and clean energy options.
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
Rolling Meadows can periodically advertise efficiency incentives offered by [ComEd](#) and [Nicor Gas](#), cost savings generated by choosing ENERGY STAR appliances, and available green energy options such as community solar and alternative energy supply.

Long Term

- E-5. Rolling Meadows will evaluate opportunities to install renewable energy systems at City facilities.
In addition to traditional buy-and-operate, these opportunities may leverage innovative financing mechanisms such as power purchase agreements (PPAs), leasing, and lease-purchase.
- E-6. Rolling Meadows will evaluate the use of performance contracting for future energy efficiency projects.

Sustainability Spotlight

Rolling Meadows Site Now Home to Northrop Grumman's Largest On-Site Solar Energy System

Feb. 9, 2021 – Northrop Grumman Corporation's Rolling Meadows site is now host to a new rooftop solar power-generating system, joining the company's other solar power initiatives in Florida, California, and Virginia. The Rolling Meadows solar panel system is the largest on-site solar energy installation at a Northrop Grumman facility to date.

"With the installation of this new solar panel system, Northrop Grumman is supporting the state of Illinois as it expands its renewable energy use and is taking another meaningful step to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions," said Sandra Evers-Manly, vice president, global corporate responsibility, Northrop Grumman. "This initiative underscores our long-term commitment to addressing climate change and promoting environmental sustainability in our operations."

The 1.1-megawatt AC solar power-generating system is expected to reduce an estimated 870 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year, which is equivalent to powering nearly 100 homes for a year.

The system is owned and operated by a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC. This qualifies as part of the Illinois Shines initiative, a state incentive program supporting new solar energy projects in Illinois. The renewable energy certificates (RECs) generated by this solar power system will be sold to help the state of Illinois meet its renewable energy goals. Northrop Grumman will purchase replacement RECs from other renewable energy projects to match the system's electricity output and environmental impact claims.



Land

Pete Jackson of Arlington Heights tends to Emily's Prairie behind Rolling Meadows High School, which he created and dedicated to his daughter, Emily, who died in 2006 after taking pain medication that had been prescribed for someone else.

(L) Kimball Hill, the founder of Rolling Meadows, aimed to develop a city which would attract young families to the outskirts of Chicago. He chose the name Rolling Meadows to describe this new community as a place with natural beauty and appeal. Today, homes and businesses fill in the once pristine meadows and open farmlands, and the prairielands of the past are often difficult to imagine.

While much of the native prairie has been built upon, the vision of the founders was to establish a network of green open space for the community to enjoy. Parks running the length of the city highlight the Salt Creek and its adjacent land. Kirchoff Road is landscaped with native prairie gardens and trees. Creekside Woods Park preserves the native forest of the area.

Importantly, the city is located adjacent to the 3,558-acre Ned Brown Preserve, more commonly known as Busse Woods.

This forest preserve is one of the Cook County Forest Preserve District's largest open space preserves and includes the largest surface area reservoir lakes of the Salt Creek watershed. Salt Creek, with numerous tributaries that pass through Rolling Meadows, is the primary water source for this wilderness treasure.

Numerous residents of Rolling Meadows and the surrounding communities are dedicated to the preservation of the native land and wildlife. It provides not only a place to recreate, but also a place to learn about the natural environment, native plants, and wildlife. These conservation interests drove the foundation of the City's Environmental Committee and ultimately the formulation and adoption of this Sustainability Plan in 2023.

The strategies in this **Land** section blend the importance of conservation, thoughtful development strategies, and continued investments in the urban forest and landscaping in order to preserve Rolling Meadows' most important natural features.

Sustainability Spotlight

'Emily's Prairie'

A few raindrops fell while local officials made speeches at the Emily's Prairie dedication ceremony in Rolling Meadows. Then Pete Jackson took the podium. As he spoke about the prairie's namesake -- his 18-year-old daughter, Emily Jackson, who died in 2006 after taking OxyContin pain medication -- a ray of sunshine pushed through the clouds and lit up the colorful, new prairie behind him. "It was like it was on cue," said Ty Lagoni of Barrington, a former Rolling Meadows environmental committee co-chairman who attended the Sept. 21 event. "It was beautiful."

Emily's Prairie is the product of a three-year vision by Jackson, Lagoni, the City of Rolling Meadows and a group of local environmentalists to restore a quarter-acre teasel- and buckthorn-covered site along Salt Creek. The site is along the walking path behind Rolling Meadows High School, near the bridge on Barker Avenue. Jackson, a biologist and Arlington Heights resident, has done similar volunteer projects at the Deer Grove Forest Preserve near Palatine. So, when he and Lagoni came across this Rolling Meadows parcel in 2011, they viewed it as a nice but ambitious Earth Day project for the city. It wasn't going to be Emily's Prairie.

But then Jackson started to spend hours each week at the site -- for two years. It was in the shadow of Emily's high school, where she had graduated a few months before her death. Sometimes Jackson showed up alone at the prairie after work to weed and plant, when he wasn't leading a group of volunteers or scouts. He often would be down on his hands and knees, carefully clearing away weeds from the budding new native prairie plants. He nurtured them, to make sure they were taking hold where invasive nonnative weeds once ruled. As he worked, Jackson often thought about his daughter, the walks they took together through suburban prairies, and how much she loved the blooming flowers and plants.

So last year, Jackson decided to ask the Rolling Meadows leaders for permission to name the site Emily's Prairie. They immediately said yes.

"I hope that it can be something that other people who might have lost someone, who are hurting, they can come to this place once in a while and see what's blooming, and it'll be therapeutic," Jackson said. "It's been therapeutic for me." He hopes the adjacent schools will use Emily's Prairie for educational purposes, and maybe students can help maintain it or use it as inspiration for other projects.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Land

- **Sustainable Development.** Encourage strategic development that upholds sustainability principles.
- **Land Preservation.** Conserve, restore and enhance natural features and ecosystems.
- **Parks & Open Space.** Support networks of accessible, well-used, and enjoyable parks.
- **Urban Forestry.** Sustain a robust urban forest canopy.
- **Landscapes.** Sustain beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services.
- **Policy.** Achieve greater livability through sustainable land use and housing policies.
- **Education, Outreach & Engagement.** Cultivate a conservation ethic in the community.

City Strategies For Sustainable Land

Attained

- ✓ Rolling Meadows has collaborated in a regional [study of its urban tree canopy including data specific to the City.](#)
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has been recognized as a Tree City USA for 34 consecutive years.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has conducted an inventory and assessment of trees on public rights-of-way.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has a full-time professional City Forester and a management plan for its public tree inventory to manage risks and promote tree health and species diversity.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows proactively plants new trees, requires trees to be planted in connection with certain developments, and offers cost-sharing programs for resident tree planting.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted a comprehensive tree ordinance to preserve trees on public and private property.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows' zoning regulations provide for mixed-use developments, increased walkability, protect natural assets including open space and wetlands, and support climate resiliency.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows enforces stringent soil erosion and sediment control regulations.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows recognizes Arbor Day and Earth Day through special events.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows engages volunteer groups in the stewardship of public lands, such as Emily's Prairie and Salt Creek.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows incorporates educational and informational signage into projects that include native and sustainable features.



Short Term

- L-1. Rolling Meadows will reduce sprawl by promoting infill development that reduces adverse impacts and infrastructure demands.
Significance: High | Difficulty: High
Infill development can result in compact and complete residential neighborhoods, the conservation of greenfields and open space, and the elimination of underutilized and contaminated properties. Infill development patterns naturally support the City's financial health and promote walkability and bicycle transportation as alternatives to use of the automobile.
- L-2. Rolling Meadows will utilize regional data for future tree initiatives that increases the City's percentage of canopy coverage and species diversity, especially by restoring oak ecosystems.
Significance: High | Difficulty: High
While Rolling Meadows has a well-developed framework for tree management, the City should refine its approach using data from the [2020 Chicago Region Tree Census](#) to guide future City planting initiatives and private development policy. For example, other communities in the region have adopted development rules that require species diversity in plantings on a point-based system.
- L-3. Rolling Meadows will comprehensively revise its subdivision regulations to promote sustainability.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: High
The City's subdivision regulations control how tracts of land are subdivided into parcels and are provided with roads, utilities, and other key infrastructure. The City can revise its subdivision regulations to better support the conservation of topography, views, drainage, trees; the creation of recreational opportunities, greenways and open space, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure; and the integration of stormwater best management practices. While these regulations can significantly shape future developments within Rolling Meadows, their impact will be limited as the community is landlocked and mostly developed. (cross-listed as policy M-4)
- L-4. Rolling Meadows will partner to develop the Icenogle property as a key asset.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Moderate
The 3-acre Icenogle Property (5041 Dupont) was the former home of the Icenogle family before it was bequeathed in trust to the Rolling Meadows Park District. The Park District intends to "eventually use the [site] to provide opportunities for individual growth and community connections through education, nature-based play and environmental stewardship." ([details](#)) The City should partner with the Park District to ensure that this property is planned and developed in a manner that maximizes its public benefit and educational value as to native ecosystems.
- L-5. Rolling Meadows will identify partnerships for high-value wood products from those trees that must be removed.
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
Rolling Meadows will identify wood product producers who may be able to utilize salvage wood locally.

- L-6.** Rolling Meadows will explore options to support residential native landscaping and urban agriculture.
Significance: **Low** | **Difficulty:** **Moderate**
Rolling Meadows will ensure that its regulations support, rather than deter, residents who choose to cultivate native landscapes or other forms of reasonable urban agriculture on their property.
- L-7.** Rolling Meadows will raise community awareness of native and sustainable landscaping.
Significance: **Moderate** | **Difficulty:** **Low**
The City can use its existing communications channels, such as the monthly newsletter and social media, to provide information about native and sustainable landscaping; species and planting information; the importance of pollinators and the [Million Pollinator Garden Challenge](#); and other strategies consistent with this category.

Long Term

- L-8.** Rolling Meadows will create native and sustainable landscaping through municipal projects, with a special focus on gateways and business districts. (cross-listed as policy M-10, W-5)
- L-9.** Rolling Meadows will implement natural and low-impact management practices for its landscapes, including integrated pest management strategies.





Leadership

(LP) Through thoughtful and expedient implementation of this Sustainability Plan, the City has the opportunity to assert its position as a thought leader among the members of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and in Chicago's northwest suburbs. The **Leadership** Category articulates Strategies that will lead to recognition of Rolling Meadows and will utilize the City's standing to advance sustainability efforts at higher levels and for the benefit of the region.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Leadership

- **Leadership.** Enlist support for GRC2 goals through regional, state, and national leadership.
- **Advocacy.** Advocate for policies that align with and advance the GRC2.
- **Collaboration.** Work collaboratively towards a sustainable region.



City Strategies for Sustainable Leadership

Attained

- ✓ Rolling Meadows has been [recognized](#) as having one of the ten best Complete Streets policies in the United States.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has been recognized as a Tree City USA for 34 consecutive years.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted the GRC2 Framework and this Sustainability Plan.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has an Environmental Committee tasked with overseeing the City's sustainability efforts including implementation of this Plan.

Short Term

- LP-1. Rolling Meadows will evaluate new recognition programs for sustainability achievement.
Significance: Moderate | **Difficulty:** High
Numerous programs such as [Walk Friendly Communities](#), [Bicycle Friendly Communities](#), US EPA's [Green Power Communities](#), US Department of Energy's [SolSmart](#), Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' [EV Readiness Program](#), and others may recognize the City's achievements in sustainability. Attaining and maintaining these recognitions often requires considerable time and financial commitment relative to their rewards. The City should evaluate the cost-benefit and opportunity cost of pursuing these public recognition programs to celebrate its success.
- LP-2. Rolling Meadows will investigate Tree City USA Growth Awards.
Significance: Moderate | **Difficulty:** Moderate
In addition to continuing to receive Tree City USA awards annually, the Arbor Day Foundation offers a [Growth Award](#) program for Tree City USA communities that "demonstrate higher levels of tree care and community engagement." The City likely engages in the level of activity necessary to qualify for this award.

Long Term

- LP-3. Rolling Meadows will aggressively pursue implementation of this Sustainability Plan.
- LP-4. Rolling Meadows will engage local and regional partners in implementing this Sustainability Plan and sustainability policies for the Chicago region.
Some of these partners are identified in [Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities](#).
- LP-5. Rolling Meadows will advocate for increased regional transit service that benefits the City's residents, employers, and destinations, including through sustainable funding mechanisms and governance reform. (cross-listed as policy M-9)
- LP-6. Rolling Meadows will advocate for state and federal policies that advance this plan as well as other policies that support municipal sustainability efforts.



Mobility

(M)

Transportation and mobility are key drivers to economic development, modern lifestyles, and public safety.

As described in the [Climate](#) Section, electrifying transportation is among the greatest opportunities to reduce GHG emissions in our region. According to CMAP's [most recent municipal-level emissions summary](#) (data from 2019, released in 2023), on-road transportation is the City's largest per capita contributor to GHG emissions. Beyond carbon emissions, an abundance of roads and paved surfaces also make Rolling Meadows less resilient to severe storms by increasing flood potential, and the use of road salt pollutes the land and water streams through runoff. Sustainable communities recognize the unsustainable consequences of current transportation systems on our lifestyle and environment, and work to implement alternative approaches to transportation modes, mobility, and transport pathways management.

The Strategies in this **Mobility** Section pair reducing emissions by electrifying existing transportation patterns (e.g. single-occupancy vehicles) with creating viable alternatives to these patterns, including increased access to transit as well as safer bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Mobility

- **Bike and Pedestrian.** Support safe and effective active transportation.
- **Transportation Infrastructure.** Maintain a diverse, safe, and efficient transportation network.
- **Stewardship.** Support efficient transportation that uses resources wisely.
- **Policy.** Integrate sustainability into transportation policies, programs, and regulations.
- **Shared-Use Mobility.** Promote the provision of public and sustainable transportation choices.
- **Education & Outreach.** Promote public and sustainable transportation choices to the community.

Sustainability Spotlight



Alternative fuel transportation provides an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions resulting from traditional fossil fuel powered transportation vehicles. Electric vehicles are a key example of alternative fuel transportation. However, the infrastructure for electric vehicles requires investment into a network of charging stations. Over the past several years, Tesla, one of the major manufacturers of electric vehicles, has installed 20 charging stations in the City of Rolling Meadows. These Tesla Superchargers are available 24/7 at the north end of the Meijer parking lot.

As the ratio of electric vehicles to petroleum powered vehicles grows, cities will need to address the growing need for a larger network of electric vehicle charging stations.

City Strategies for Sustainable Mobility

Attained

- ✓ The Rolling Meadows Comprehensive Plan identifies gaps in bicycle and pedestrian networks and includes a plan to improve connectivity in the community and beyond.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has been [recognized](#) as having one of the ten best Complete Streets policies in the United States.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows provides bicycle parking in public spaces and requires it in connection with private developments.

Short Term

- M-1. Rolling Meadows will plan for the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**
Significance: High | Difficulty: High
Federal programs to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) have quickly increased funding, technical assistance, charging speeds, and charging availability throughout the United States. Rolling Meadows should proactively begin to plan for public and municipal EV charging infrastructure to be competitive for funding and site selection. (Cross-listed as policy MO-1)
- M-2. Rolling Meadows will re-examine its parking requirements for private development.**
Significance: High | Difficulty: High
Minimum parking requirements imposed upon development are a substantial driver of impervious surface coverage and “gray” infrastructure development, the reduction of green spaces and buffers, and the urbanization of the appearance of Rolling Meadows. Leveraging new public parking, bicycle and pedestrian alternatives, cross-access and cross-parking arrangements, and regulatory flexibility can reduce the pressure to pave and realign incentives to favor other site improvements instead of additional parking capacity.
- M-3. Rolling Meadows will evaluate its building and zoning codes to support the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**
Significance: High | Difficulty: Moderate
A comprehensive evaluation of the City’s building and zoning codes can help to expedite, rather than obstruct, the deployment of EV charging infrastructure in Rolling Meadows. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus’ [EV Readiness Program](#) can serve as a blueprint for this effort whether or not the City participates in a cohort or seeks formal recognition.
- M-4. Rolling Meadows will comprehensively revise its subdivision regulations to promote sustainability.**
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: High
The City’s subdivision regulations control how tracts of land are subdivided into parcels and are provided with roads, utilities, and other key infrastructure. The City can revise its subdivision regulations to better support the conservation of topography, views, drainage, trees; the creation of recreational opportunities, greenways and open space, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure; and the integration of stormwater best management practices. While these regulations can significantly shape future developments within Rolling Meadows, their impact will be limited as the community is landlocked and mostly developed. (cross-listed as policy L-3)
- M-5. Rolling Meadows will discourage vehicle idling.**
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
While an increasing proportion of vehicles come equipped with idle reduction technologies (e.g. automatic stop and start) to meet Federal fuel efficiency requirements, idling still results in local air pollution and fuel waste. Designating “no idling” zones at key destinations like schools and pursuing a standalone public awareness campaign can help reduce the negative effects of idling.
- M-6. Rolling Meadows will educate the public on alternative transportation and fuels.**
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
The City can use its existing communications channels, such as the monthly newsletter and social media, to provide information about transit options, walking and bicycling as an alternative to driving, and the harms of vehicular idling.



Long Term

- M-7. Rolling Meadows will continue to fill gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network by **implementing its bicycle and pedestrian plan and Complete Streets Policy.**
- M-8. Rolling Meadows will pursue Safe Routes to School planning to further accelerate improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network for students.
- M-9. Rolling Meadows will advocate for increased regional transit service that benefits the **City's residents, employers, and destinations, including through sustainable funding mechanisms and governance reform.** (cross-listed as policy LP-5)
- M-10. Rolling Meadows will create native and sustainable landscaping through municipal projects, **with a special focus on gateways and business districts.** (cross-listed as policy W-5, L-8)
- M-11. Rolling Meadows will resume its annual community bike ride or "Open Streets" event.



Municipal Operations

(MO)

While it is important to drive sustainable practices throughout the community, municipal operations can be leaders by demonstrating sustainable values and practices. The Strategies in the **Municipal Operations** Section concern practices in the City's own municipal operations, including opportunities for continuous improvements in reducing energy, promoting alternative fuels, reducing water use, and driving improvements in waste and recycling. These Strategies will have a direct impact and will help demonstrate that these techniques can be implemented by the community at large.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Municipal Operations

- **Lead by Example.** Lead by demonstrating sustainable values and practices.
- **Sustainable Operations.** Integrate sustainability into all municipal operations.
- **Municipal Fleet.** Operate a safe, clean, and efficient fleet.
- **Data Management.** Collect and manage data to verify and advance sustainability.

City Strategies for Sustainable Municipal Operations

Attained

- ✓ Rolling Meadows has dedicated staff managing its portfolio of sustainability programs and the implementation of this Plan.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted the GRC2 Framework and this Sustainability Plan.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has begun to electrify municipal fleet vehicles.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows shares in consolidated and consortium-based municipal services.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows uses lifecycle capital improvement (infrastructure) budgeting to extend the physical life of assets.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows uses sustainability criteria in selecting and designing capital projects.



Short Term

- MO-1. Rolling Meadows will plan for the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Significance: High | Difficulty: High

Federal programs to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) have quickly increased funding, technical assistance, charging speeds, and charging availability throughout the United States. Rolling Meadows should proactively begin to plan for public and municipal EV charging infrastructure in order to be competitive for funding and site selection. (Cross-listed as policy M-1; other related policies in the [Mobility](#) Section)

- MO-2. Rolling Meadows will expand the use of “smart” technology to manage operations that have a sustainability impact.

Significance: High | Difficulty: Moderate

Solid waste, tree inventory, fleet, energy usage, and other areas of the City’s operations that relate strongly to this Plan can be more effectively and efficiently managed by implementing new technology. This technology can also help implement the City’s future measurement strategies (see goal MO-4 in this section.)

- MO-3. Rolling Meadows will expand the availability of recycling at special events.

Significance: Low | Difficulty: Moderate

While special events in Rolling Meadows represent only a very small segment of municipal waste, providing recycling opportunities and education at these events leads by example and is a cost-effective way to raise public awareness. (Cross-listed as policy WR-6)

Long Term

- MO-4. Rolling Meadows will evaluate data collection and dashboarding to provide an ongoing evaluation of sustainability progress between regional data updates.

- MO-5. Rolling Meadows will consider an environmental purchasing policy for major or recurring purchases.

- MO-6. Rolling Meadows will explore dedicating cost savings from sustainability initiatives to fund future improvements.



Sustainable Communities

(SC)

An often unstated or understated sustainability value is **Equity**, and the recognition of the importance of the social, cultural, and historical aspects of our community. The **Sustainable Communities** Section presents Strategies that promote the arts, human services, civic involvement, and the other intangible assets that will be preserved through community investments in sustainability.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Communities

- **Arts and Culture.** Promote cultural vibrancy in the community.
- **Health and Safety.** Foster a culture of health, safety, and wellness.
- **Local Food.** Increase access to sustainably grown local food.
- **Social Justice.** Sustain community principles that are welcoming, inclusive, and equitable.
- **Sustainable Identity.** Promote a sustainable identity for the community.
- **Policy.** Ensure local policies and codes support sustainability.
- **Education, Outreach & Engagement.** Cultivate community values based on principles of sustainability.



City Strategies for Sustainable Communities

Attained

- ✓ The Rolling Meadows History Museum is a volunteer effort to document the City's valuable history, culture, and development.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows is launching a Human Services Department to provide and connect residents to high-quality human services programs.
- ✓ The Rolling Meadows HOPE Fund funds victim services, food pantries, and other important human services programs.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows offers a diverse housing stock that is accessible to residents with diverse family situations, physical abilities, and income levels.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows operates a community garden and allows for backyard chicken keeping with a simple permit process.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has an Environmental Committee tasked with overseeing the City's sustainability efforts including implementation of this Plan.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows hosts several sustainability-focused events, including annual cleanup days, tree planting days, fundraisers, and recycling events.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has been the home of Opera In Focus, a puppet opera fine arts program, for 30 years.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows is offering key documents in Spanish, including its Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows is the home of the Northwest Concert Band.

Short Term

SC-1. Rolling Meadows will expand access in languages other than English.

Significance: High | Difficulty: High

As of the most recent U.S. Census Bureau 5-year estimate, 42% of Rolling Meadows residents speak a language other than English at home and believe they speak English less than “very well,” with over half speaking Spanish. Most City staff only speak English and most City publications are only in English. The City can change its practices to be more accessible for the speakers of other languages.

SC-2. Rolling Meadows will plan its programs and policies to be a community welcoming of persons of all ages.

Significance: High | Difficulty: High

Rolling Meadows is already an active participant in Metropolitan Mayors Caucus workgroups that are studying the implementation of [Age-Friendly Community](#) and [Universal Design](#) principles in the region. The City should continue to support these efforts and work to implement their recommendations when published.

SC-3. Rolling Meadows will support community arts and cultural events.

Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: High

For a community of its size, Rolling Meadows does not have an organized art community or an abundance of public art. The City can take a more active role in sponsoring public art installations and community artists. The City Council may also consider establishing a Committee on Arts and Culture to coordinate and promote art and culture programs and activities.

SC-4. Rolling Meadows will raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions.

Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Moderate

As one of the most diverse communities in Chicago’s northwest suburbs, Rolling Meadows can better acknowledge, include, and integrate its diverse cultural traditions in its branding, communications, and events.

Long Term

SC-5. Rolling Meadows will evaluate and remove barriers to resident participation in civic affairs.

SC-6. Rolling Meadows will support, recognize, and incent the attainment of sustainable certifications by private development.

[LEED](#), [ENERGY STAR](#), and [Passive House](#) are all examples of certifications that have been attained in Chicagoland.

SC-7. Rolling Meadows will partner with schools to integrate sustainable topics in their curriculum.



(WR)

Rolling Meadows has a dual waste and recycling program with a city-operated fleet for refuse and garden waste, and a contracted service to collect and manage recyclable waste. The city also holds regular recycling days for special items such as hazardous waste disposal, Christmas tree mulching, electronic recycling, and Halloween pumpkin composting.

These **Waste and Recycling** Strategies propose an ongoing effort to reduce landfill-bound waste, improve recycling programs, and promote the use and reuse of sustainable materials.

GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Waste & Recycling

- **Waste Reduction.** Support sustainable material management.
- **Recycling.** Recycle materials across all sectors.
- **Waste Diversion.** Divert waste from landfills.
- **Policy.** Enact policies that cause sustainable material management.
- **Education & Engagement.** Engage the community in waste reduction and recycling.



City Strategies for Sustainable Waste & Recycling

Attained

- ✓ Rolling Meadows has specialized programs to help residents deal with household hazardous waste (HHW), pharmaceuticals, and electronics.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows allows home composting.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows actively partners with the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) to plan for sustainable waste management.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows organizes a community-wide cleanup day every Earth Day.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows uses recycling volunteers in recycling education and events.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has reduced the use of paper in municipal operations by shifting key functions to electronic-first workflows, such as utility billing and building permits.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows provides curbside recycling to all residences as a component of solid waste service.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows enforces Cook County's construction and demolition debris diversion requirements.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows offers specialty pickup programs for electronics, Halloween pumpkins, Christmas trees, "white goods," and other special household wastes that should not be directed to landfills.



Short Term

- WR-1. Rolling Meadows will mitigate pollution from disposable bags.**
Significance: High | Difficulty: High
Many communities throughout Chicagoland have either imposed a per bag tax on the use of disposable bags or have completely prohibited the distribution of disposal bags under certain circumstances. Reducing disposable bag encourages reusable options, reduces plastic and paper waste, and reduces litter that pollutes the environment and endangers wildlife especially within Salt Creek.
- WR-2. Rolling Meadows will conduct a study of commercial recycling participation.**
Significance: High | Difficulty: High
State law requires that, before the City may consider awarding an exclusive franchise for solid waste disposal, it must conduct a three-year study of recycling participation rates. If less than 50% of commercial accounts are recycling, the City will gain the statutory authority to award a franchise. Other communities that have engaged in this study have confirmed reduced commercial recycling rates and have been able to capture increased recycling access and cost savings.
- WR-3. Rolling Meadows will expand recycling access in the public realm.**
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Moderate
Provide one recycling container adjacent to each public trash can. Label trash cans as “Landfill” to encourage thoughtful personal waste habits. Consider requiring private developments to meet these requirements outdoors.
- WR-4. Rolling Meadows will educate the public about waste and recycling.**
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Moderate
The City can use its existing communications channels, such as the monthly newsletter and social media, to provide information about reducing waste generation to the public. The City may also consider adding more informative signage to its solid waste program, e.g. cart stickers.
- WR-5. Rolling Meadows will explore options to improve reuse or recycling of clothing, shoes, and other textiles.**
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Moderate
While virtually all textiles and clothing are recyclable, very little of this product is diverted by consumers. The City can work to improve access to swaps, exchanges, and commercial services that improve textile diversion from the landfill.
- WR-6. Rolling Meadows will expand the availability of recycling at special events.**
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
While special events in Rolling Meadows represent only a very small segment of municipal waste, providing recycling opportunities and education at these events leads by example and is a cost-effective way to raise public awareness. (Cross-listed as policy MO-3)

Long Term

- WR-7. Rolling Meadows will set waste reduction and recycling targets for its municipal operations.**
- WR-8. Rolling Meadows will set waste reduction and recycling targets for the community.**
Specific goals may target sectors such as single-family residential, multi-family, and commercial and institutional users; or may target other criteria such as percentage of contaminated or mis-sorted waste.
- WR-9. Rolling Meadows will pursue regional efforts to provide curbside food scrap composting for residential users.**
Curbside food scrap composting can redirect food waste from landfills to facilities where they can be reprocessed into mulch.



Cleanup efforts along the Salt Creek in Rolling Meadows promote awareness to the Salt Creek watershed and protect the creek for wildlife, vegetation, and outdoor recreation

Water and Stormwater

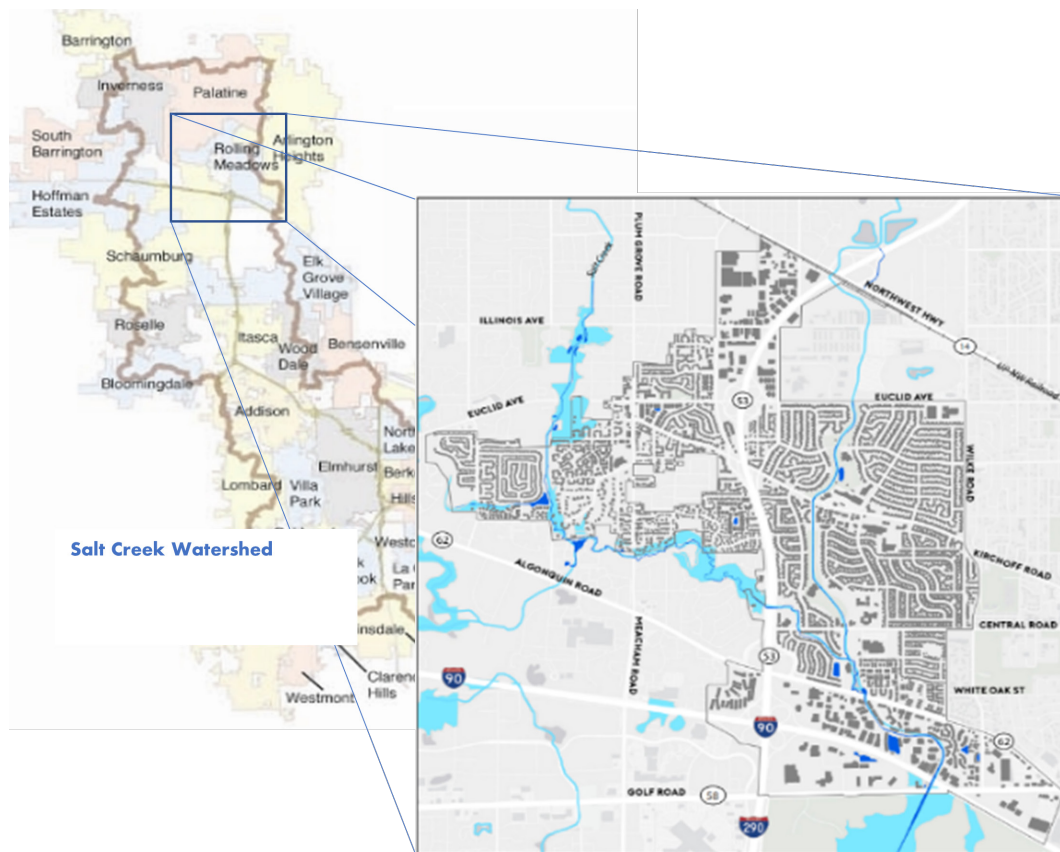
(W) Among the greatest assets of Rolling Meadows is its water resources. The potable water system is sourced from Lake Michigan through the Northwest Suburban Municipal Joint Action Water Agency (NSMJAWA) through a purchase agreement with the City of Chicago. Rolling Meadows maintains 5.5 million gallons of water storage facilities, 4 pumping stations, and 4 deep wells for emergency purposes. This includes 2 elevated storage tanks and 85 miles of water main that provide approximately 1 billion gallons of water to the city's residents, businesses, and public facilities. Spent potable water which drains into the sewage system is transported to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for treatment and discharge.

Stormwater is a separate and distinct water system which is managed through either ground seepage or is drained into the more than 54 miles of underground storm sewer pipes that carry the surface water to Salt Creek. The City of Rolling Meadows is in the Salt Creek watershed. All stormwater eventually flows into the Salt Creek and its tributaries, exiting the city southward through the Salt Creek reservoirs in the Busse Woods Forest Preserve. Unfortunately,

pollutants enter the stormwater system from lawns, driveways, parking lots, streets, and improperly disposed of chemicals. Detergents, pesticides, road salt, pet waste, fertilizers, and other household chemicals are among the pollutants which enter the stormwater system and into the Salt Creek.

Over the past decades, environmentally conscious citizens have undertaken a concerted effort to clean up and maintain the Salt Creek watershed. These efforts have focused mainly on trash removal and shoreline cleanup. While tremendous progress has been made to protect this natural water system from trash and litter, the water quality remains poor based on several pollutants. This has resulted in the persistence of algae blooms in the reservoir system, indicating an imbalance of water flow and chemical nutrients.

A sustainable community promotes water conservation and effective water management to ensure the long-term health of the community, wildlife, and natural environment. The [Salt Creek Watershed Network](#) and the [DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup](#) are two organizations which focus on water quality, working with local governments throughout the watershed on programs to protect this vital water system.



Top: The City of Rolling Meadows lies within the Salt Creek Watershed, with several tributaries feeding into the Creek and exiting the City into the reservoir lakes in the Busse Woods Forest Preserve.

Bottom: The Salt Creek and several of its tributaries flow through Rolling Meadows.



GRC2 Goals for Sustainable Water

- **Water Conservation.** Use and distribute water efficiently.
- **Water Quality.** Protect and improve water quality.
- **Water Infrastructure.** Manage water system assets sustainably.
- **Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure.** Optimize the use of natural and built systems to manage stormwater.
- **Policy.** Practice stewardship of water resources.
- **Stewardship.** Enact policies to protect water resources.
- **Education and Outreach.** Engage the community in water stewardship.

Sustainability Spotlight

Salt Creek Watershed Network

Protection of the Salt Creek watershed is critical to maintaining a sustainable community. The watershed provides a natural habitat for wildlife and native vegetation. It also provides natural areas for hiking, biking, birding, canoeing, and kayaking. The Rolling Meadows Environmental Committee aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Salt Creek within our community by organizing annual cleanups along the creek and promoting recreational use along the creek, while protecting the native wildlife and vegetation.

The Salt Creek Watershed Network (SCWN) is a grass roots organization founded in 1998 to bring together environmentally concerned people, raise awareness of the issues facing the creek, and find ways to make the creek an enjoyable resource for people. SCWN recognized that various groups with common goals were operating throughout the watershed, but local efforts needed a regional perspective to ensure long-term and watershed-wide improvements.

The mission of Salt Creek Watershed Network is to seek a common vision and provide coordination and promote communication among the various volunteer groups, citizens, businesses, agencies and others operating and living within the watershed. By facilitating, partnering, and conducting public education throughout the watershed, SCWN promotes the improvement of water quality, recreation, and the use of best management practices and ecosystem enhancements.

In February 1999, the planning process began to identify and prioritize the concerns of the watershed residents. Eight major resource categories were identified: Water quality, Streambank maintenance, Habitat, Flooding, Land Use, Public Policy, Public Awareness/Education, and Recreation.



City Strategies for Sustainable Water

Attained

- ✓ The City requires that all new fixtures are EPA WaterSense certified for efficiency.
- ✓ The City periodically audits its water loss using AWWA's nationally accepted methodology.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows uses lifecycle capital improvement (infrastructure) budgeting to extend the physical life of assets.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has studied the cost-recovery of its water, sewer, and stormwater systems to ensure a sustainable level of investment.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows uses a tiered rate structure for water costs that charges more for more intense users of potable water supplies.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has a fully automated water meter reading system to improve accuracy and help customers identify leaks and other water loss.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows operates and enforces a backflow prevention program to preserve the quality of its water supply.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has a dedicated, per-property funding mechanism for stormwater infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has adopted a ban on coal tar-based sealants to reduce runoff pollution from public and private pavement maintenance.
- ✓ Storm drains throughout Rolling Meadows are labeled to identify the destination of discharge.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows' zoning regulations explicitly acknowledge and support the installation of Stormwater Best Management Practices.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows enforces stringent soil erosion and sediment control regulations.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows participates in the Salt Creek Watershed Network as well as regional watershed planning efforts for Upper Salt Creek.
- ✓ Rolling Meadows has incorporated bio-swale components and educational signage into its Park Street storm sewer project.

Short Term

- W-1. Rolling Meadows will participate in the Community Rating System to reduce flood risks and flood insurance rates.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: High
The [Community Rating System](#) is a voluntary FEMA program where communities that practice floodplain management in excess of the Federal minimum requirements receive reduced flood insurance rates.
- W-2. Rolling Meadows will explore policies to disincant direct connections between downspouts and municipal storm sewers.
Significance: Moderate | Difficulty: Low
Directing drainage to flow across yards and landscapes improves the storm capacity of storm sewers, as some water will be captured by soil and plants, and other water will enter the system more slowly than if it was directly piped.
- W-3. Rolling Meadows will become an EPA WaterSense partner.
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
As a Lake Michigan water recipient, Rolling Meadows already requires that all new fixtures be WaterSense certified. [Becoming a WaterSense partner](#) simply commits the City to promote awareness of these existing requirements.
- W-4. Rolling Meadows will educate and provide supports to residents regarding water conservation and sustainable stormwater management.
Significance: Low | Difficulty: Low
The City can use its existing communications channels, such as the monthly newsletter and social media, to provide information about water conservation and sustainable stormwater management. In addition, the City can provide discounts on rain barrels and technical assistance on practical tactics that residents and small businesses can use to manage stormwater on their property, such as sewer improvements; the design of rain gardens and swales; and plant selections.

Long Term

- W-5. Rolling Meadows will create native and sustainable landscaping through municipal projects, with a special focus on gateways and business districts. (cross-listed as policy M-10, L-8)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan aims to drive broad participation from the community. This sustainability plan is a significant undertaking. It will take individual and cooperative work by businesses, government operations, schools, faith communities, community organizations, and others to reach our goals. The coordination and oversight of the plan will be the responsibility of the City Manager and the Rolling Meadows Environmental Committee.

If this Plan is to be achieved:

City Manager/Assistant City Manager

The City Manager will provide broad oversight of the plan as well as direct the City's staff in internal implementation. The City Manager will lead the City's efforts to attain the goals and strategies as outlined in the Sustainability Plan.

Rolling Meadows Environmental Committee

The Environmental Committee will document the plan and work with the City Council and the City Manager to adopt the plan. The Committee will also develop and publish revisions to the plan as the project evolves. An annual report will be written in collaboration with the City Manager and submitted to the City Council.

Rolling Meadows City Council

As the primary governing body, the City Council will work to advance the goals and strategies of the Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan and provide guidance and feedback. The Council will also work with the City Manager and the Environmental Committee to draft and consider policy changes to support and implement the Plan.

Economic Development Committee

The City's EDC will promote alignment between the City's economic development efforts, its Comprehensive Plan, and its Sustainability Plan. The EDC will support economic development which prioritizes sustainability practices and principles.

Planning and Zoning Commission

The City's PZC will promote planning and development which incorporates the principles of sustainability and recommend zoning actions and ordinances that promote environmental sustainability.

Rolling Meadows Businesses

Businesses within Rolling Meadows will pursue sustainability initiatives that align with the goals of this Policy, and the City can create the appropriate policies and incentives to facilitate their actions.

Schools Serving the City and Residents

Local schools can be a tremendous catalyst for educating our community on the concepts of sustainability and sustainable practices. Where feasible, the schools should encourage Earth Clubs and Environmental Clubs to undertake projects which align and advance Rolling Meadows' sustainability goals.

Citizens and Community Service Organization

A sustainable community requires participation and active input from a broad and diverse population. Everyone can contribute by undertaking projects which contribute to a sustainable community. For example, tree planting, Salt Creek cleanup projects, planting native gardens, reducing waste and recycling, promoting energy efficiency, and utilizing clean energy are sustainable practices which all citizens can adopt.

Sustainability Spotlight

Illinois American Water Awards Rolling Meadows High School Grant

December 18, 2019

Illinois American Water presented Rolling Meadows High School District 214 with a \$2,000 grant to support the school's new Agriculture Pathway with a focus on sustainability. The grant was part of the company's annual environmental grant program for watershed initiatives that improve, restore, or protect watersheds across the state. Since 2009, Illinois American Water's Environmental Grant program has awarded more than \$222,000 to 66 projects dedicated to water protection.

"Through our environmental grant program, we provide stronger support for community initiatives related to clean water, conservation, education and community sustainability," explained Jen Thornburg, Senior Manager of the Chicago Metro District for Illinois American Water.

The project entails students collecting water samples from Salt Creek, researching proper native plants for the adjacent prairie, growing

the plants from seedlings using the school's new greenhouse classroom, and transplanting them leading to a student-developed natural biofiltration system. The environmental grant will also support related field trips, plants, and tools.

Rolling Meadows Principal, Eileen Hart thanked the company for their support. "We are incredibly excited to receive this funding, which will help us continue to build our new agriculture pathway in ways that empower our students to learn in and out of the classroom. This money makes it possible for students to study, plant, nurture, and replant native plants, creating a biofiltration system for Salt Creek in partnership with city leadership. At Rolling Meadows High School and across District 214, we believe strongly in providing real-world opportunities like these to our students. We know it enriches their experience in high school and prepares them for future success. In this case, we're simultaneously teaching them about sustainability and the importance of bettering the world around them."



The check presentation to the Freshman AG Biology class featuring Natalee Cedillo, Illinois American Water; Erin Holmes, District 214 Education Foundation; Eileen Hart, RMHS Principal; and John Eilering, District 214 Education Foundation.



Conclusion

Creating a sustainable community requires the participation of Rolling Meadows as a whole: municipal operations, businesses, schools, service organizations, faith communities, youth groups, and citizens.

While the City as a body politic can set the direction in the Rolling Meadows Sustainability Plan, the tasks of implementing projects which will effect change requires the participation of everyone and every business.

Many larger corporations already have their own sustainability plan in place and are working to improve their operations by implementing sustainable technologies and practices. For example, Northrup Grumman, one of Rolling Meadows largest businesses, established a sustainability plan which aims to drive a net zero greenhouse gas emission levels by 2035, reduce water consumption, promote electric vehicle use, and drive sustainable practices.

Many community groups also already commit their time and talents in efforts to clean up our natural areas and waterways. For example, the Willow Bend School Earth Club and the Rolling Meadows High School Biology classes participate in planting native plants and trees in the community. The City's Environmental Committee coordinates programs for Earth Day which include educational programs and native plant landscaping. The City Forester works with groups to promote annual tree planting on Arbor Day.

Collectively, these efforts are already making a difference in helping to prepare our community and our region for the future. This Plan does not displace them or diminish the value of their contributions. However, the coordination of these programs across boundaries and subject matter areas is necessary for Rolling Meadows to continue real progress towards being a sustainable community. This Plan can and will serve as the blueprint to realize that future.



5. Appendix A:

Strategy Summary Matrix

		Significance			
		1 - High	2 - Moderate	3 - Low	Total
Difficulty	1 - High	9	5		14
	2 - Moderate	4	6	4	14
	3 - Low		4	10	14
	Total	13	15	14	42

Number	Goal Text	Significance	Difficulty
C-1	Rolling Meadows will establish one or more greenhouse gas emissions targets.	1 - High	1 - High
C-2	Rolling Meadows will assess threats from extreme weather events.	1 - High	1 - High
C-3	Rolling Meadows will explore options for local air monitoring.	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate
C-4	Rolling Meadows will reduce the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOC) from its municipal operations.	3 - Low	3 - Low
C-5	Rolling Meadows will educate the public about climate change.	3 - Low	3 - Low
ED-1	Rolling Meadows will create and promote a community brand and tourism activities featuring the City's natural resources and cultural characteristics.	1 - High	2 - Moderate
ED-2	Rolling Meadows will attract and retain businesses that practice and promote sustainability.	3 - Low	2 - Moderate
ED-3	Rolling Meadows will recognize and support businesses that promote sustainability.	3 - Low	3 - Low
ED-4	Rolling Meadows will promote local goods and services.	3 - Low	3 - Low

Number	Goal Text	Significance	Difficulty
E-1	Rolling Meadows will pursue SolSmart recognition.	2 - Moderate	1 - High
E-2	Rolling Meadows will evaluate procurement of additional renewable resources whenever it solicits proposals for community choice aggregation.	2 - Moderate	3 - Low
E-3	Rolling Meadows will evaluate procurement of renewable energy whenever it solicits electricity supply proposals for its own consumption.	2 - Moderate	3 - Low
E-4	Rolling Meadows will raise community awareness of energy efficiency programs and clean energy options.	3 - Low	3 - Low
L-1	Rolling Meadows will reduce sprawl by promoting infill development that reduces adverse impacts and infrastructure demands.	1 - High	1 - High
L-2	Rolling Meadows will utilize regional data for future tree initiatives that increases the City's percentage of canopy coverage and species diversity, especially by restoring oak ecosystems.	1 - High	1 - High
L-3	Rolling Meadows will comprehensively revise its subdivision regulations to promote sustainability.	2 - Moderate	1 - High
L-4	Rolling Meadows will partner to develop the Icenogle property as a key asset.	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate
L-5	Rolling Meadows will identify partnerships for high-value wood products from those trees that must be removed.	3 - Low	3 - Low
L-6	Rolling Meadows will explore options to support residential native landscaping and urban agriculture.	3 - Low	2 - Moderate
L-7	Rolling Meadows will raise community awareness of native and sustainable landscaping.	2 - Moderate	3 - Low
LP-1	Rolling Meadows will evaluate new recognition programs for sustainability achievement.	2 - Moderate	1 - High
LP-2	Rolling Meadows will investigate Tree City USA Growth Awards.	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate

Number	Goal Text	Significance	Difficulty
M-1	Rolling Meadows will plan for the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.	1 - High	1 - High
M-2	Rolling Meadows will re-examine its parking requirements for private development.	1 - High	1 - High
M-3	Rolling Meadows will evaluate its building and zoning codes to support the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.	1 - High	2 - Moderate
M-4	** Crosslisted **		
M-5	Rolling Meadows will discourage vehicle idling.	3 - Low	3 - Low
M-6	Rolling Meadows will educate the public on alternative transportation and fuels.	3 - Low	3 - Low
MO-1	** Crosslisted **		
MO-2	Rolling Meadows will expand the use of “smart” technology to manage operations that have a sustainability impact.	1 - High	2 - Moderate
MO-3	Rolling Meadows will expand the availability of recycling at special events.	3 - Low	2 - Moderate
SC-1	Rolling Meadows will expand access in languages other than English.	1 - High	1 - High
SC-2	Rolling Meadows will plan its programs and policies to be a community welcoming of persons of all ages.	1 - High	2 - Moderate
SC-3	Rolling Meadows will support community arts and cultural events.	2 - Moderate	1 - High
SC-4	Rolling Meadows will raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions.	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate
WR-1	Rolling Meadows will mitigate pollution from disposable bags.	1 - High	1 - High

Number	Goal Text	Significance	Difficulty
WR-2	Rolling Meadows will conduct a study of commercial recycling participation.	1 - High	1 - High
WR-3	Rolling Meadows will expand recycling access in the public realm.	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate
WR-4	Rolling Meadows will educate the public about waste and recycling.	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate
WR-5	Rolling Meadows will explore options to improve reuse or recycling of clothing, shoes, and other textiles.	3 - Low	2 - Moderate
WR-6	** Crosslisted **		
W-1	Rolling Meadows will participate in the Community Rating System to reduce flood risks and flood insurance rates.	2 - Moderate	1 - High
W-2	Rolling Meadows will explore policies to disincent direct connections between downspouts and municipal storm sewers.	2 - Moderate	3 - Low
W-3	Rolling Meadows will become an EPA WaterSense partner.	3 - Low	3 - Low
W-4	Rolling Meadows will educate and provide supports to residents regarding water conservation and sustainable stormwater management.	3 - Low	3 - Low