



2025

City of Elgin

Climate Action & Resiliency Plan

CITY OF ELGIN
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LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM CITY LEADERSHIP

Elgin has a long-standing record of building a sustainable community. In 2011, City Council adopted the community-driven Sustainability Action Plan, developed with input from more than 100 local stakeholders, laying the groundwork for sustainable practices across our city. Today, Elgin must continue to be proactive and solution-oriented in addressing climate challenges that will shape life for generations to come.

In 2021, the City Council declared a Climate Emergency, followed by the completion of a Community-wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory in 2023. The Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CAP) is our next step. It is an equitable, forward-looking strategy to reduce emissions, address climate risks, and strengthen community safety, health, and economic vitality. Communities with climate action plans consistently achieve greater emissions reductions, and this plan will guide decision making, allocate resources efficiently, and track progress over time.

Moving forward, Elgin will continue to work with residents, businesses, and partners to bring this plan to life, preparing for climate impacts and leading by example. By working together and making decisions that prioritize the long-term good of our community, we can reduce emissions, strengthen resilience, and join with neighboring communities to build a sustainable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Kaptain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Kaptain" clearly legible.

Mayor David J. Kaptain

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Sincerely,

Mayor David J. Kaptain

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Elgin Sustainability Commission

City Staff

Robert B. Cagann, Fire Chief
Glen Dettman, Building Maintenance Superintendent
Greg Hulke, Parks and Facilities Superintendent
Kristin Iftner, Sustainability Manager
Gio Jungo, Management Analyst
Marc Mylott, Community Services Director

City of Elgin Planning and Zoning Commission

Karina Nava, Assistant City Manager
Aaron Neal, Public Works Director
Jennifer Philips, Neighborhood Services Director
Mike Pubentz, Public Services Director
Jessica VanDyke, Sustainability Coordinator

Community Partners

Advocate Aurora Health
Butera Market
ComEd
Cook County
Centro de Información
Downtown Neighborhood Association
Elgin Area Climate Action NOW
Elgin Community Bikes
Elgin Community College
Elgin Development Group
Elgin Green Groups
Elgin High School Evergreen Club
Elgin Hispanic Network
Elgin Public Museum
First Congregational Church of Elgin
Food for Greater Elgin
Forest Preserve District of Kane County
Gail Borden Public Library District
Golden Kiwanis
Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren Green Team
HLR
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Elgin

Judson University
Junkluggers
Kane County
Lakeshore Recycling Services
Lao Buddhist Temple of Elgin
Larkin High School
MC Squared Energy Services
Mckinley Elementary School
Metra
Midwest Compost LLC
Northeast Neighborhood Association
Pace Bus
PADS of Elgin
Shared Harvest Co-op
The Conservation Foundation
Tyler Creek Watershed Coalition
U-46 School District
University of Illinois Extension
Wild Ones of Greater Kane County
Youth Leadership Academy
YWCA



INTRODUCTION

The City of Elgin is committed to building a vibrant, safe and resilient community — both for today’s residents and for future generations. In pursuit of this vision, the City has taken action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect natural resources and promote environmental sustainability across the community.

The Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CAP) builds on Elgin’s longstanding efforts, providing a clear roadmap for future climate initiatives. Like many communities, Elgin is already experiencing the effects of a changing climate — from rising temperatures to extreme storms and increasingly unpredictable weather.

Addressing, adapting to and mitigating these challenges will require a collective effort from all members of the Elgin community, including residents, businesses, local agencies and City staff. The CAP is designed to serve as a comprehensive and equitable strategy, accelerating transformational action to meet the City’s climate goals and safeguard Elgin’s future.

CAP Goals



Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050



Adapt to the impacts of climate change



Foster community engagement and collaboration



Deliver social, environmental and economic benefits to all residents

Previous Climate Action Work in Elgin

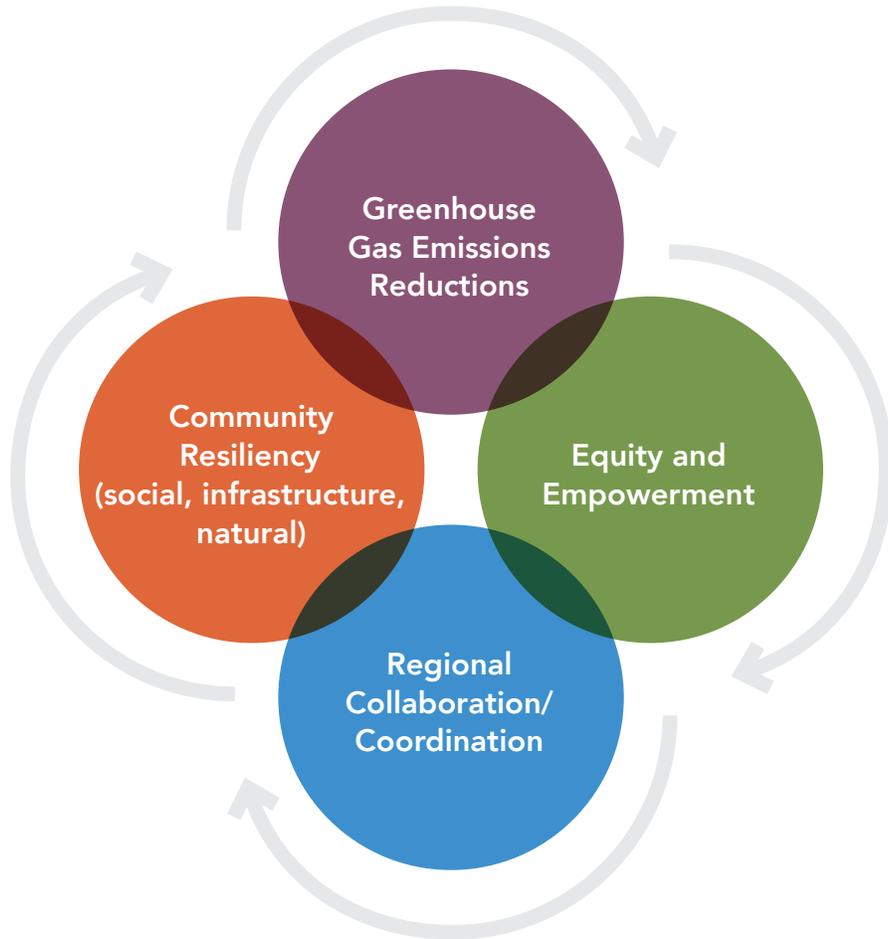
The City of Elgin has been committed to advancing sustainability and resilience, both through local initiatives and by supporting regional climate efforts. The CAP builds on this foundation, providing a roadmap to guide Elgin's future climate action.

Elgin Climate Action Timeline

- **2008**
Sustainable City Master Plan developed
- **2011**
Sustainability Action Plan adopted
- **2014**
Sidewalk Gap and Transit Stop Study completed
- **2017**
Elgin adopts the Greenest Region Compact 2, Mayor signs a letter supporting the Paris Climate Agreement
- **2020**
City Council adopts a Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency
- **2023**
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory is completed for the City
- **2024-2025**
Climate Action and Resiliency Plan is developed for adoption

Guiding Principles

To guide development of the CAP and keep it grounded in the values that are important to the community, four guiding principles were created. The guiding principles were used as evaluation criteria for screening potential actions - scoring them on their ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase resiliency, promote equity, leverage regional collaboration and empower community members to lead Elgin in its climate transformation.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction

Climate action should help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that are released into the atmosphere.

Equity and Empowerment

Climate action should address the ways that climate impacts are unequally distributed and work to empower community members to be active decision-makers.

Regional Collaboration and Coordination

Climate action should be supported by regional collaboration and strong community partnerships.

Community Resilience

Climate action should promote social connectedness, invest in infrastructure that is built to withstand and absorb changing weather patterns and preserve and strengthen natural ecosystems.

Plan Elements & Actions

The CAP is structured around six key plan elements — topic areas that organize and guide Elgin’s climate action efforts. Each element includes a vision statement describing what a sustainable future for Elgin could look like, along with action blueprints that detail meaningful work to take within each topic.



Commercial Energy

Elgin’s commercial sector thrives through efficient and cost effective operations, use of clean and reliable energy sources and maximizing revitalization of existing or underutilized space.



Sustainable Resource Consumption

Elgin is a community of mindful consumption, where raw materials and water resources are protected for future use, waste generation is minimized and opportunities to use waste material for new purposes are encouraged.



Residential Energy

Elgin’s residential buildings and neighborhoods are powered by clean, affordable and reliable energy and reflect the history and character of the entire community.



Sequestration & Biodiversity

The Elgin community respects and celebrates the inherent value of its natural resources and biodiversity and prioritizes protection and restoration of these resources.



Transportation & Mobility

Elgin’s transportation systems and infrastructure align with community needs, are affordable to users, minimize pollution and create safe, accessible connections between home, work, learning and other services.



Public Health & Safety

Elgin is a safe and socially connected community that cares for all community members, is prepared for future climate risks and is committed to improving the health and well-being of its most vulnerable populations.

Co-Benefits of Climate Action

Co-benefits are the additional positive outcomes that result from a climate action beyond its primary goal. Recognizing these co-benefits helps illustrate the broader ripple effects climate actions can have across Elgin. Many of the strategies in the CAP offer common co-benefits, such as:

Green House Gas Emissions Reduction

The action will or is likely to minimize fossil fuel use or reduce GHG emissions.

Infrastructure Resilience

The action will contribute to enhancing the resiliency of Elgin’s built infrastructure systems to the impacts of climate change.

Natural Resilience

The action will increase resilience through nature-based solutions and/or preserving or restoring ecosystem services.

Social Resilience

The action will enhance resilience by reducing vulnerability of community members to climate change impacts, through reduced exposure to hazards, increasing social connectedness and/or mitigating chronic stressors.

Equity and Empowerment

The action reduces disparities in accessing resources, empowers diverse leadership and/or engages non-traditional stakeholders in decision-making.

Climate Action Summary Table Key

Implementation Responsibility

-  **Elgin**
City government is primarily responsible for carrying out this action
-  **Elgin + Partners**
City government will need to work collaboratively with other partners to complete this action.

Co-Benefits

-  **GHG Emissions Reduction**
-  **Infrastructure Resilience**
-  **Natural Resilience**
-  **Social Resilience**
-  **Equity & Empowerment**

Cost

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Low
Existing resources or less than \$50k | Medium
Between \$50k - \$150k | High
More than \$150k |

Timeframe

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Short
1-2 years | Medium
3-5 years | Long
5+ years |

Summary of Climate Actions

Plan Element	Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
 Commercial Energy	Develop and implement a municipal building electrification and decarbonization program.	★ +	\$\$\$	● ● ●	 
	Collaborate with Utility partners to decarbonize the local grid and to advance the decarbonization of the broader multistate regional grid.	★ +	\$\$\$	● ● ●	 
	Promote implementation of net-zero building standards and building electrification for new commercial construction through voluntary incentives.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	  
	Continue to implement Commercial Area Design Guidelines as defined in the Elgin Comprehensive Plan, especially guidelines related to adaptive building re-use, tree cover, bike and pedestrian infrastructure and mass transit access.*	★	\$	●	  

Plan Element	Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
 Residential Energy	Promote programs that educate residents—homeowners, renters and landlords—on energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy retrofits.	★ +	\$	●	  
	Promote financial assistance programs that empower residents to undertake energy efficiency improvements, with an emphasis on supporting low-income and energy-burdened households.	★ +	\$\$	●	  
	Continue to pursue incentives and policies for improving residential building efficiency.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	 
	Promote community renewable energy programs for residents.	★ +	\$\$	●	  
	Continue to implement Residential Area Design Guidelines as defined in the Elgin Comprehensive Plan, especially guidelines related to pedestrian and bike infrastructure and landscaping and tree cover guidelines.*	★	\$	●	 

*Indicates an action not requiring a full Implementation Blueprint. In some cases, the City of Elgin has already begun implementation or has an existing plan in place, making a detailed blueprint unnecessary.

Co-Benefits
 GHG Emissions Reduction
  Infrastructure Resilience
  Natural Resilience
  Social Resilience
  Equity & Empowerment

Plan Element	Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
 <p>Transportation & Mobility</p>	Identify improvements for bus stops along all major routes to encourage use of public transit and work with local agencies to ensure facilities are maintained and accessible.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	 
	Assess the feasibility of transitioning the municipal fleet and contracted services to zero-emission vehicles. Pursue opportunities that align with the recommendations from the fleet assessment.	★	\$\$\$	● ● ●	 
	Explore opportunities to develop transportation demand management (TDM) incentives and programs.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	  
	Continue to encourage new development to include EV charging infrastructure and bike parking and storage.	★ +	\$	●	 
	Launch an educational campaign to raise awareness and promote the benefits of electric and hybrid vehicles.	★ +	\$\$	●	 
	Pursue policy, projects, initiatives and programs that foster a walkable, bikeable and transit-supportive community.	★ +	\$\$\$	● ● ●	  

Plan Element	Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
 <p>Sustainable Resource Consumption</p>	Launch a water conservation educational campaign.	★ +	\$	●	
	Develop and establish a "buy local" program and marketing campaign that promotes procuring food and other products from local food producers and Elgin-based businesses.	★ +	\$	●	  
	Minimize waste generation and improve recycling and organics collection programming.	★ +	\$	● ●	
	Collaborate regionally to promote food waste recovery initiatives.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	 
	Promote the repurposing and sharing of underutilized or vacant building spaces and resources among local businesses and organizations.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	 








Plan Element	Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
 <p>Sequestration & Biodiversity</p>	Promote the use of low-impact development and green infrastructure, particularly in natural areas with sensitive environmental features.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	
	Develop and launch a native pollinator garden program that supports habitat and pathways for pollinators.	★ +	\$\$	●	
	Integrate incentives for mitigation measures and buffering strategies into development codes to better protect waterways, floodways and flood-prone areas.	★ +	\$	●	
	Convert vacant lots and buildings into green spaces.	★ +	\$\$	● ● ● ●	
	Maintain a tree inventory and management plan and adopt a tree preservation ordinance.*	★	\$\$	● ●	

Plan Element	Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
 <p>Public Health & Safety</p>	Continue to implement “heat island” mitigation strategies, particularly in neighborhoods affected by heat islands and areas with high levels of impervious surface coverage.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	
	Support neighborhood and community garden programs that expand access to healthy, locally grown food—particularly for individuals facing food insecurity—through targeted assistance and incentives.	★ +	\$	● ●	
	Develop and launch an emergency preparedness and response educational campaign.	★ +	\$	●	
	Incentivize climate resiliency standards for new construction and development.	★	\$	● ●	

*Indicates an action not requiring a full Implementation Blueprint. In some cases, the City of Elgin has already begun implementation or has an existing plan in place, making a detailed blueprint unnecessary.








CLIMATE CHANGE IN ELGIN

Climate change refers to the long-term shift in the Earth’s weather patterns, driven largely by the buildup of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Human activities — such as vehicle use and energy consumption in buildings — are major contributors to the increasing levels of GHGs and the resulting changes in climate.

Like many communities across the country, Elgin is already experiencing the impacts of climate change. In Illinois, the climate has become warmer and wetter overall, with more unpredictable precipitation patterns and increasingly severe storms. These shifts pose risks to people, infrastructure, natural ecosystems and the economy.

The Climate Action and Resiliency Plan will help Elgin address the challenges posed by rising GHG emissions and a changing climate, while also promoting resilience, public health and broader benefits for residents, workers and visitors alike.

Greenhouse Gases and Sources

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect. Common GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and fluorinated gases. While some GHGs occur naturally — such as carbon dioxide released by trees and other plants — many are produced through human activities like the burning of fossil fuels. The amount of GHGs released by human activity began rising sharply around 1900 and the rate of emissions has accelerated significantly in recent decades.



GHG Inventory and Goals

GHG inventories help communities identify the sources of their emissions and understand their contributions to climate change. In 2023, Elgin completed a comprehensive GHG inventory using 2021 data to establish a baseline for the City's emissions. By pinpointing where emissions are coming from, Elgin can strategically plan actions to reduce them.

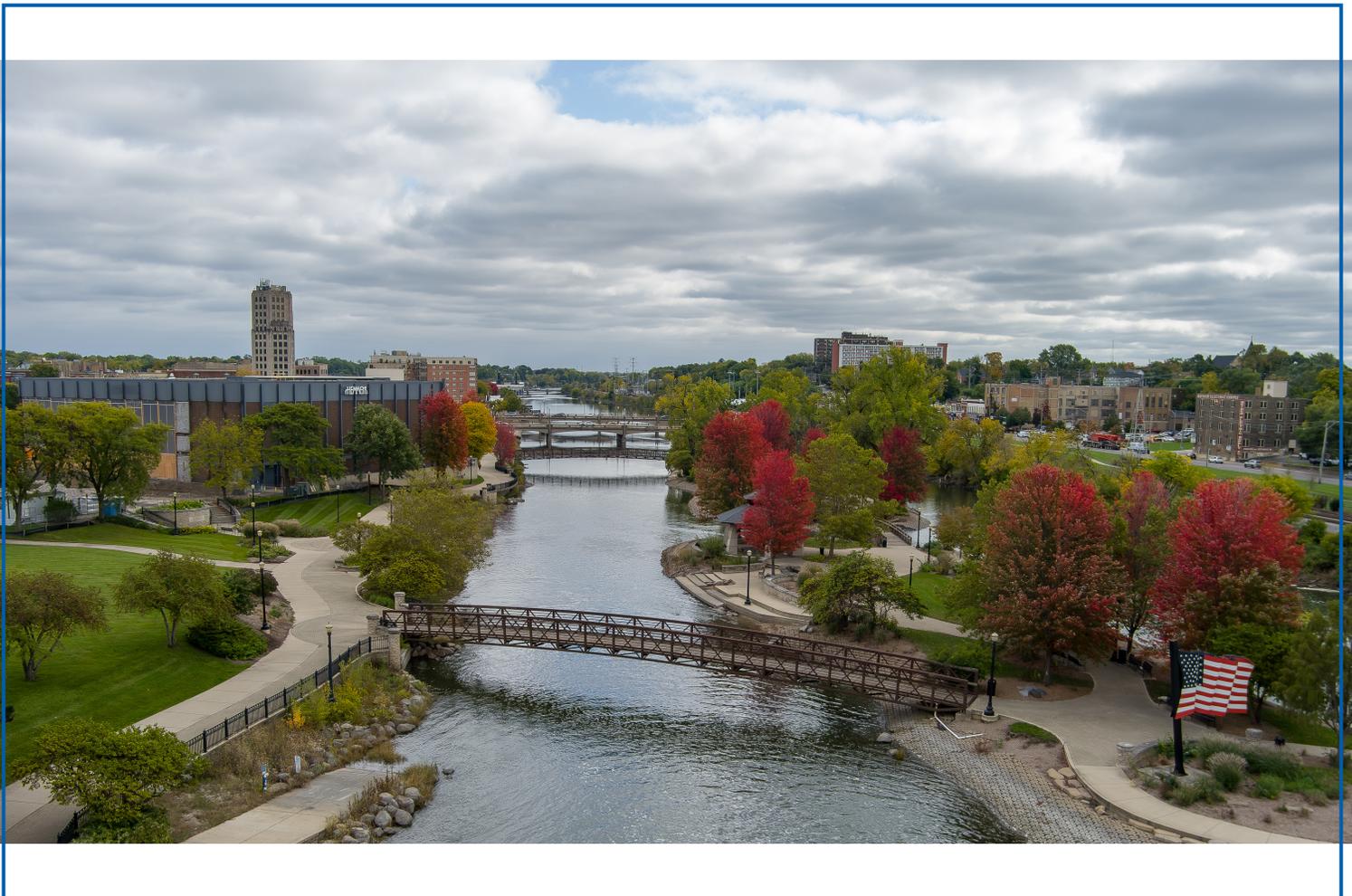
The actions in the CAP align with the goals and recommendations identified through Elgin's GHG Inventory, supporting Elgin's efforts to lower emissions and build a healthier, more sustainable community over time.

Measuring GHG Emissions

GHG emissions are measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e), which expresses the impact of different greenhouse gases relative to carbon dioxide. This standard measurement allows for comparisons of climate impacts across a wide array of emission sources.

City GHG Goal

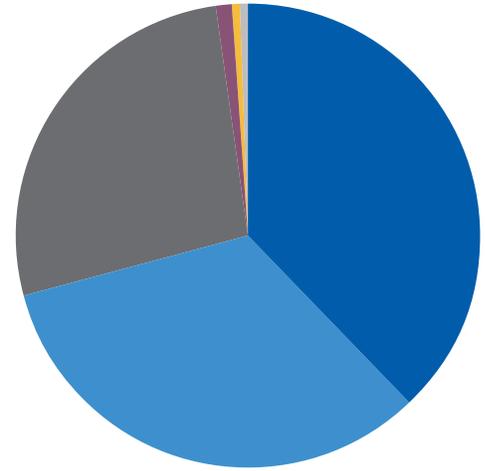
60% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030



Community-Wide GHG Emissions

2021 Community-Wide Emissions

1.23 million MTCO₂e



38%

Commercial Energy

33%

Transportation & Mobile Sources

27%

Residential Energy

■ Commercial Energy (38%)
 ■ Transportation & Mobile Sources (33%)
 ■ Residential Energy (27%)
■ Solid Waste (1%)
 ■ Process & Fugitive Emissions (<1%)
 ■ Water & Wastewater (<1%)

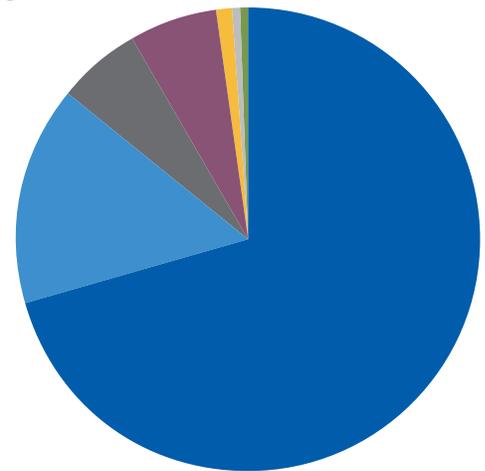
98% of Community-wide emissions come from Commercial Energy, Transportation & Mobile Sources, and Residential Energy.

Targeting these areas offers the greatest opportunity to significantly reduce Elgin’s carbon footprint.

Local Government Operations GHG Emissions

2021 Government Operation Emissions

39,330 MTCO₂e



70%

Buildings & Facilities

15%

Water & Wastewater

6%

Street Lights & Traffic Signals

■ Buildings & Facilities (70%)
 ■ Water & Wastewater (15%)
 ■ Street Lights & Traffic Signals (6%)
■ Fleet (6%)
 ■ Employee Commute (1%)
 ■ Solid Waste (<1%)
 ■ Process & Fugitive Emissions (<1%)

Local government operations are approximately 3% of total emissions in Elgin.

The City’s buildings and facilities are by far the largest source of local government GHG emissions, primarily due to the energy required for powering, heating and cooling these spaces.

Climate Risks and Vulnerability Report



A report was prepared to review climate trends and projections for the area and the region to identify anticipated hazards and provide a greater understanding of potential climate change impacts and vulnerabilities within Elgin.

Climate Change in the Region

Climate change means long-term changes in weather patterns. The effects of climate change in Elgin include:

- Increasing temperatures
- Changes in precipitation amounts and frequency, leading to increased flooding and droughts
- Changes in the frequency and severity of storms
- In 2024, Elgin experienced drought conditions in late summer and early fall and significant flash flooding in mid-July

Projected Increased Temperatures and Heat Risk in Illinois

Climate Measure	Timeframe	Low Emissions Scenario	High Emissions Scenario
Current average daily temperature	2024	55.2 °F	
Increase in average daily temperatures	By 2050	+3-4° F	+4-5° F
	By 2100	+4-5° F	+8-9° F
Number of Days ≥ 95 in Elgin	2024	1	
Number of Days ≥ 95° F	By 2050	+8-32 more days/yr	+8-40 more days/year
	By 2100	+16-40 more days/yr	+40-72 more days/year

*Sources: An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change In Illinois (2021); NOAA Centers for Environmental Information

Impacts of Rising Temperatures

- Increased electricity demands, which means higher energy costs for consumers and increased production needs for energy suppliers
- Damage to infrastructure like road pavements and rail lines due to heat
- Increases in heat-related illnesses and death, especially for vulnerable populations
- Impacts to agriculture (crops and livestock) and food prices
- Changes in the frequency and severity of storms

During community engagement activities, Elgin residents shared that extreme heat impacted their lives in the following ways:

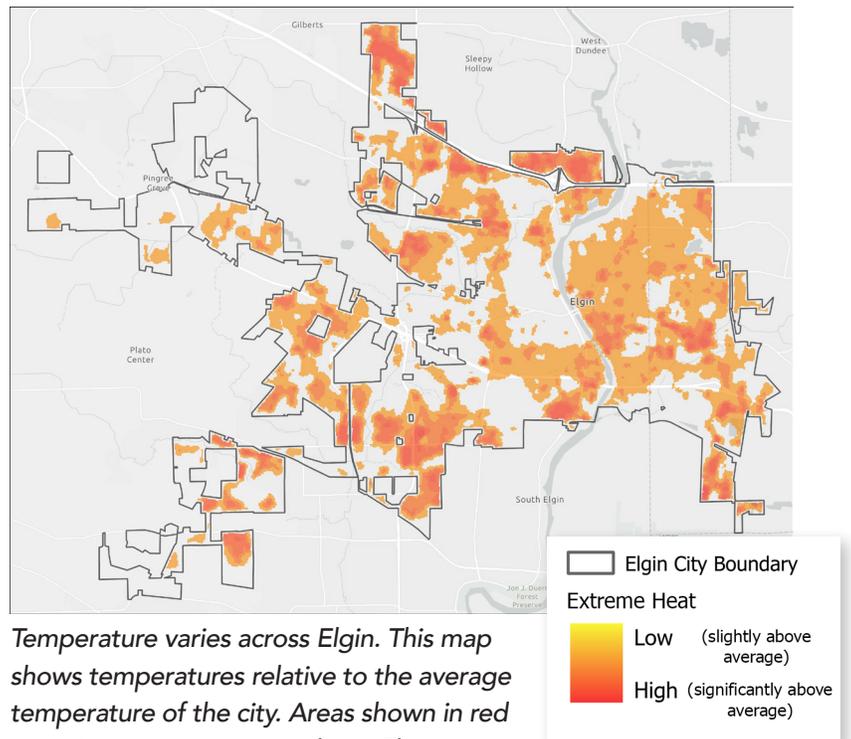
- Power outages during heat waves
- Sports practices canceled because of extreme heat
- Heat waves limiting people's ability to spend time outside

Historical Climate Trends in Illinois (1900-2020)

- 1-2° F increase in average daily temperature
- 2-3° F increase in winter and spring temperatures
- Overnight low temperatures have increased more than daytime maximum temperatures

*Source: Data for the NOAA Centers for Environmental Information, as housed by University of Illinois

Heat Risk



Temperature varies across Elgin. This map shows temperatures relative to the average temperature of the city. Areas shown in red experience more extreme heat. These areas, called Urban Heat Islands, can be up to 10 degrees hotter than non-shaded areas, on average. Source: Trust for Public Lands Heat Severity Index

Projected Changes in Precipitation and Storm Severity in Illinois

Climate Measure	Timeframe	Projected Increase
Existing Annual Total Precipitation	2024	40.87"
Annual Total Precipitation	By 2050	+0-4% (low emissions scenario) +3-6% (high emissions scenario)
	By 2100	+2-6% (low emissions scenario) +4-10% (high emissions scenario)
Days/Year with >2" Rainfall	By 2050	+15-25%
	By 2100	Up to +50%
Days/Year with >4" Rainfall	By 2050	Up to +100%
	By 2100	Up to +400%
Severity of Widespread Drought	By 2050	+40%
Increase in Flood Risk*	By 2050	>20%

*Sources: An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change In Illinois (2021) ; NOAA Centers for Environmental Information

Impacts of Precipitation and Storm Changes

- In 2024, Elgin experienced drought conditions in late summer and early fall and significant flash flooding in mid-July.
- Increase in flooding events and flood impacts
- Economic impacts from storms and flooding including property damage, job loss and business closures
- Increased risk of contamination, waterborne illness and algal blooms
- Decrease in groundwater supply due to increased summer droughts
- Impacts to agriculture, food safety, food insecurity and food prices
- Increased mosquito and tick populations, increasing the risk of insect-borne illness

During community engagement activities, Elgin residents shared that flooding impacted their lives in the following ways:

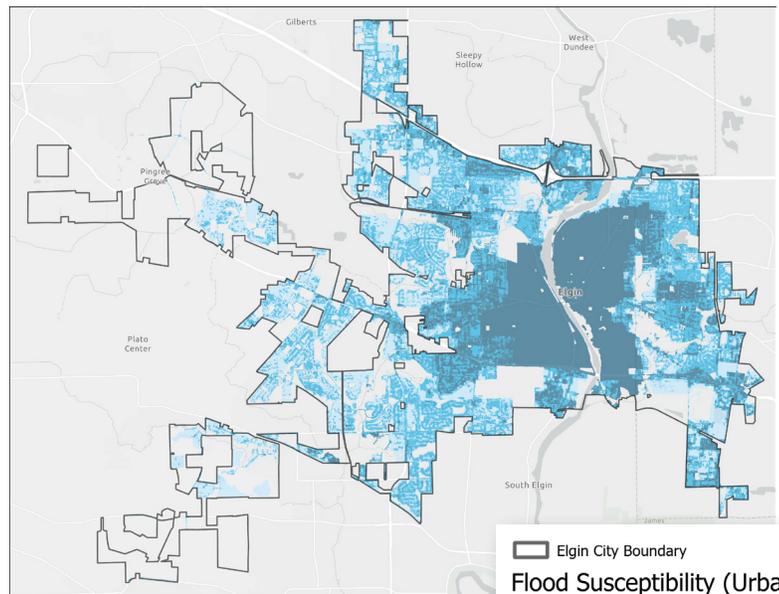
- Flooding in basements, garages and yards during heavy rain
- Power outages during thunderstorms and strong winds
- Flooding from storms blocks roads, making it harder to get to work and school

Historical Climate Trends in Illinois (1900-2020)

- 5 inch (or 12 to 15%) increase in total annual precipitation
- Wetter summers in central and northern Illinois
- 40% increase in 2-inch rain days (storms are more intense)

*Source: Data for the NOAA Centers for Environmental Information, as housed by University of Illinois

Flood Risk



This map shows the risk of flooding across Elgin. The likelihood of flooding is based on several factors, including proximity to the river, the amount of hard surfaces that don't absorb water, elevation and others. Areas in the 'high' category can be up to 50% more likely to flood than non-shaded areas. Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning 2022 Flood Susceptibility Index

Equity and Climate Vulnerability

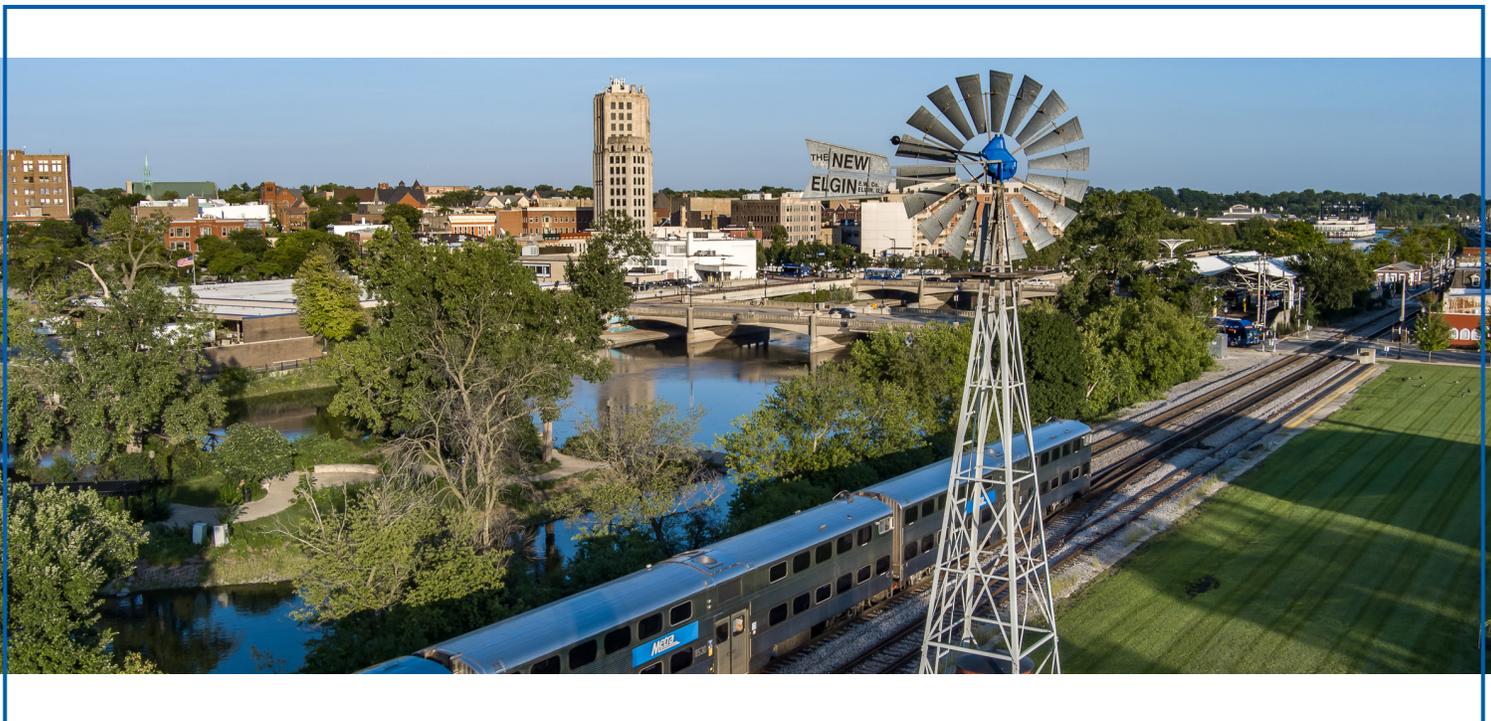
Climate change affects everyone, but its impacts are not felt equally. An individual's risk is influenced by a range of social and economic factors. Vulnerable populations are often more likely to experience negative effects from climate change — and to feel those impacts more severely. The 2024 Kane County Climate Vulnerability Assessment identifies the following vulnerable population groups:

- Children under 5
- Elders 65+
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals in economic distress
- People of color
- At-risk workers (people who work outdoors or are more exposed to climate risks like heat, poor air quality, etc.)
- Food insecure individuals
- Individuals without vehicle access

Elgin at a glance

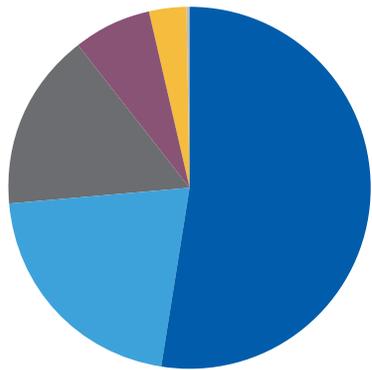
- 113,310 total population
- 41,062 households
- \$83,539 median household income
- 13% age 65 or older
- 11% living in poverty
- 47% Hispanic or Latino (any race)*
- 7% children under age 5
- 3,249 (5% of) residents work in construction, positions that require work outdoors and that are more exposed to climate risks like poor air quality
- 2,128 (5% of) housing units have no vehicle available

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-year estimates, except Hispanic or Latino from 2020 Census



Equity and Climate Vulnerability

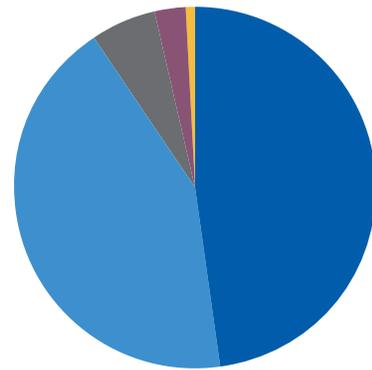
Race



- 43.4% White
- 16.7% Two or More Races
- 24.3% Some Other Race
- 6.6% Black or African American
- 6.5% Asian
- 2.4% American Indian & Alaska Native
- 0.1% Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander

*Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

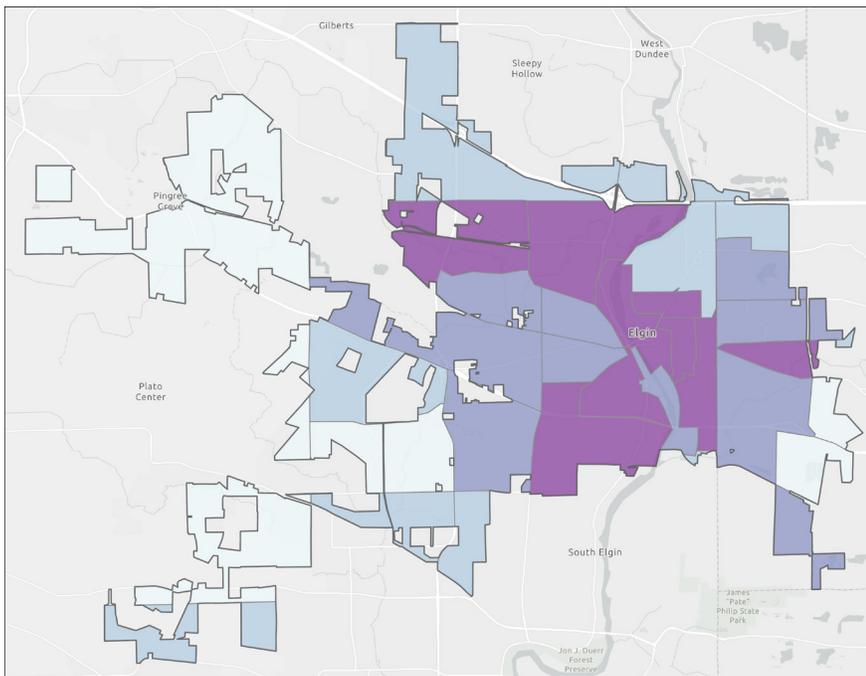
Primary Language Spoken at Home



- 48.0% English Only
- 42.8% Spanish
- 5.8% Other Indo-European Languages
- 2.6% Asian and Pacific Islander Languages
- 0.8% Other languages

*Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

Social Vulnerability in Elgin



Social, economic and other factors are often combined to develop an overall level of vulnerability, such as in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). The SVI gives an overall picture of where vulnerable populations live in Elgin.



Many of the census tracts in Elgin are in the highest percentile of social vulnerability. This map shows which areas have the highest vulnerabilities. Source: Centers for Disease Control 2022 Social Vulnerability Index



Addressing Climate Impacts and Community Vulnerabilities

Addressing equity in climate actions starts with an understanding of the vulnerable populations in the area, how they are already burdened and how climate change is expected to affect them in the future. Equitable climate actions may address the underlying conditions that contribute to vulnerability as well as mitigating the potential impacts. Prioritizing appropriate climate actions can help meet the needs of these populations. In particular for Elgin, actions that prevent, mitigate and build resilience to flooding and address extreme heat should be prioritized.

Strategies to Reduce Impacts of Extreme Heat

- Make sure people have access to air conditioning and cool spaces
- Keep utility costs low so people can afford to cool their homes
- Plant trees and install other shade structures in urban heat islands
- Increase access to parks and other greenspaces that are naturally cooler than paved areas

Strategies to Reduce Impacts of Precipitation and Extreme Storms

- Help people flood-proof their homes, businesses and other buildings
- Improve emergency communications and response systems, so people can get help when they need it
- Create more spaces where stormwater can easily be absorbed, like parks, rain gardens and other green infrastructure, especially in areas prone to flooding

Climate Resilience

Climate Resilience is the ability of our residents, businesses and municipal operations to prepare, adapt and endure **shocks**, like extreme weather, in our community. Sometimes this means reducing **chronic stressors**. Actions in this plan aim to address chronic stressors and reduce the impact of any shocks that Elgin residents may face due to climate change.

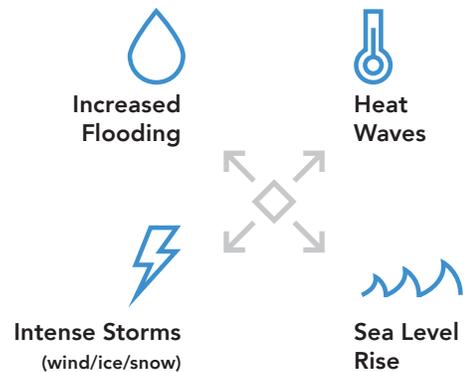
Chronic Stressor

Chronic stressors are the day-to-day challenges that take a toll on our community, like poverty, the need for a living wage and access to transportation.

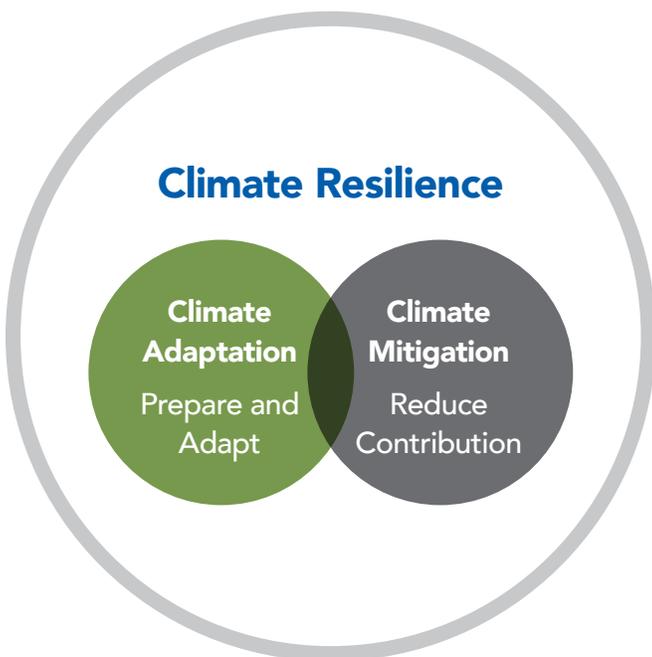


Shock

A shock is a significant event that disrupts the day-to-day and requires action. It often amplifies chronic stressors.



ADAPTATION + MITIGATION + EQUITABLE/INCLUSIVE DECISION MAKING = RESILIENCE



DEFINING RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability of a system — such as a community or an economy — to preserve its core identity while adapting to change. It reflects a state of dynamic balance, where the system can absorb or recover from disruptions without fundamentally transforming into something different.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Elgin placed community voices at the center of the CAP planning process to develop a plan that reflects the lived experiences, priorities and aspirations of residents. The City built community partnerships and laid the groundwork for future collaboration to mobilize action for implementing the CAP. Because the impacts of climate change are not experienced equally across communities, the engagement process aimed to get input to reflect the diversity of Elgin’s neighborhoods, businesses and local ecosystems.

Goals for Engagement



Build long-term relationships with community partners



Include historically underrepresented voices



Make participation accessible and engaging



Advisory Groups

Elgin formed two advisory bodies to guide development of the Plan: a Community Working Group (CWG) and a Technical Steering Committee (TSC).

Community Working Group (CWG)

Comprised of residents and representatives from community organizations, this group offered insights into how climate action intersects with education, housing, public health, food access and cultural life in Elgin.

Participating organizations included:

- African American Coalition of Kane County
- Alignment Collaborative for Education
- Centro de Información
- Elgin Cooperative Ministries
- Elgin History Museum
- Elgin Public Museum
- First Congregational Church of Elgin
- Food for Greater Elgin
- Gail Borden Public Library District
- Izaak Walton League
- Lao Buddhist Temple of Elgin
- Northeast Neighborhood Association (NENA)
- RiverLife Elgin
- University of Illinois Extension
- Wild Ones Greater Kane County
- Youth Empowerment Program
- YWCA Elgin

The Technical Steering Committee (TSC)

This committee brought together public agency staff, local businesses and utility providers to provide technical guidance on feasibility, operations and infrastructure.

It included representatives from:

- Advocate Sherman Hospital
- City of Elgin (including staff from the City Manager's Office, Community Development, Fire Department/ Emergency Management, Neighborhood Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Services and Public Works)
- City of Elgin Commissions (Including Planning and Zoning and Sustainability)
- ComEd and Nicor Gas
- Forest Preserve District of Kane County
- Junkluggers, Midwest Compost and LRS
- Local businesses
- MC Squared Energy Services
- Metra and Pace Bus
- The Power Bureau
- U-46 School District

Community Events and Focus Groups

Between August 2024 and February 2025, Elgin hosted or attended 25 outreach events and focus groups, engaging hundreds of residents from all backgrounds. These events were held in collaboration with schools, local colleges and universities, faith-based organizations and cultural groups, as shown below.

Community Outreach Highlights

Event/Location	Month/Date	Description of Engagement
Elgin Hispanic Network	August 2024	Presented on the CAP and shared CAP Fact Sheets
La Fiesta de Elgin	September 2024	Connected with Spanish-speaking residents through tabling and family-oriented programming
Elgin Police Department - Halloween Extravaganza	October 2024	Shared CAP postcards and stickers at the event resource table
Economic Development Group - HR Professionals Group	November 2024	Presented on the CAP and advised on communication with employee networks
Judson University - Sustainable Architecture Course	November 2024	Hosted a presentation and focus group about the CAP with architecture students
Youth Leadership Academy	December 2024	Hosted bilingual focus groups with students and parents to gather intergenerational input on climate priorities
McKinley Elementary School	December 2024	Promoted CAP postcards and stickers, and played a recycling relay race game with students
Larkin High School	January 2025	Led interactive workshop with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and AP Environmental Science courses to discuss climate impact experiences
Elgin High School	January 2025	Hosted a focus group with the Evergreen Environmental Club to gather input on location-specific experiences and action ideas
Rooted: A Plant-based Conference	February 2025	Shared CAP postcards in conference grab bags
Gail Borden Public Library District	February 2025	Offered drop-in tabling sessions to connect with residents in trusted public spaces and presented at the Climate Crisis and Mental Health event
Highland Avenue Church Green Team	February 2025	Engaged faith community members in dialogue around sustainability, equity and advocacy
Elgin Community College	February 2025	Hosted a focus group about building a workforce pipeline for green careers with university leadership
Golden Kiwanis	February 2025	Hosted a presentation and had members share feedback directly on maps of Elgin

Two open houses were held in May and June 2025 to review the draft Plan, in addition to various tabling sessions at two library branches. Public input has been incorporated into the Plan.

Website & Online Engagement

Elgin launched a dedicated Climate Action and Resiliency Plan website to make engagement more accessible that included regular updates, fact sheets and tools for residents to submit ideas and feedback. Key features included:

- **Interactive Map and Discussion Board** - Survey respondents provided 133 climate action ideas on the interactive map and 44 comments on the discussion board.
- **Community Survey** - The survey ran from September 3rd to December 8, 2024, and received 73 responses. Survey respondents identified climate concerns, priorities for action and barriers to participation. Survey responses highlighted themes of concerns about affordability, public green spaces/vacant lots, water quality and energy efficiency.
- **Social Media** - Monthly social media posts highlighted different elements of the CAP, educated residents and shared CAP engagement opportunities.
- **Public Comment Period Engagement** - During the public comment period on the draft CAP, 55 community members submitted feedback through surveys on the Social Pinpoint page.

CLIMATE ACTIONS

The climate actions outlined in the CAP represent essential steps toward building a safer, more resilient Elgin. These actions were developed through a collaborative process that included a baseline data analysis, input from advisory group workshops and direct feedback from residents during community engagement efforts. From more than 200 ideas, a focused set of priority actions was selected and organized into six core topic areas. Broader strategies related to governance and partnerships are addressed in the Implementation chapter. By working with community partners, Elgin is laying a strong foundation to achieve the CAP's long-term goals.



Commercial
Energy



Sustainable
Resource
Consumption



Residential
Energy



Sequestration
& Biodiversity



Transportation
& Mobility



Public Health
& Safety

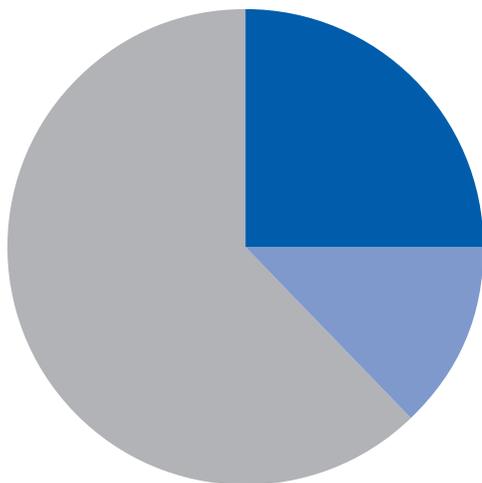


Commercial Energy

Vision: Elgin’s commercial sector thrives through efficient and cost effective operations, use of clean and reliable energy sources and maximizing revitalization of existing or underutilized space.

Based on the 2021 GHG Inventory, the commercial sector accounts for 38% of Elgin’s community-wide emissions. This sector includes emission from businesses, educational institutions, municipal buildings and the broader electrical grid. Significant opportunities exist to reduce emissions in this area by improving building energy efficiency, expanding the use of renewable energy and repurposing underutilized or existing spaces to maximize resource efficiency. These efforts not only support Elgin’s climate goals—they also help lower operating costs, bolster local businesses and reduce environmental impacts across the community.

Community-Wide Emissions (Year 2021)



- 25% Commercial Energy - Electricity
- 13% Commercial Energy - Natural Gas
- 62% All other sources

315,445 MTCO₂e*

from Community commercial electricity usage

154,614 MTCO₂e

from Community commercial natural gas usage

23,050 MTCO₂e

from Municipal buildings & facilities electricity usage

4,663 MTCO₂e

from Municipal buildings & facilities natural gas usage

2,404 MTCO₂e

from Municipal street lights & traffic signals usage

*metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e).



Progress to Date

- 2022** - Residents and small businesses can now access community solar projects through participation in the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Community Solar Clearinghouse Program.
- 2023** - Received Gold-Level designation through the SolSmart program, which helps municipalities reduce barriers to solar energy development and adoption.
- 2023** - GHG Emissions Inventory completed, using 2021 data.
- 2026** - New Elgin Sports Welcome Campus to open with all-electric and net-zero ready building features.

Key Stakeholders

- ComEd: Electric utility company that serves northern Illinois, including Elgin.
- Nicor Gas (Nicor): Natural gas utility company that serves northern Illinois, including Elgin.
- Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC): Applied research center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign that supports climate solutions for communities and public agencies.
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP): Regional planning agency for northeastern Illinois.
- Elgin Community College (ECC): Has an Energy Management Department, that provides curriculum related to the business of renewable energy for residential and commercial buildings.

Action Summary Table

Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
Develop and implement a municipal building electrification and decarbonization program.	★ +	\$\$\$	● ● ●	☁️ 🏢
Collaborate with Utility partners to decarbonize the local grid and to advance the decarbonization of the broader multistate regional grid.	★ +	\$\$\$	● ● ●	☁️ 🏢
Promote implementation of net-zero building standards and building electrification for new commercial construction through voluntary incentives.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	☁️ 🏢 💧
Continue to implement Commercial Area Design Guidelines as defined in the Elgin Comprehensive Plan, especially guidelines related to adaptive building re-use, tree cover, bike and pedestrian infrastructure and mass transit access.*	★	\$	●	☁️ 🏢 💧

*Denotes an action not requiring a full Implementation Blueprint.

Co-Benefits
☁️ GHG Emissions Reduction
🏢 Infrastructure Resilience
💧 Natural Resilience
👤 Social Resilience
👥 Equity & Empowerment

Develop and implement a municipal building electrification and decarbonization program.

Municipal building electrification and decarbonization involve upgrading and retrofitting facilities to reduce energy use and minimize greenhouse gas emissions, thereby improving overall environmental performance. However, implementing these initiatives presents challenges, including substantial financial investments, extended project timelines and the need for specialized engineering expertise.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$\$	●●●		This action is supported by community input.

Elgin's Authority to Implement	Elgin can upgrade municipal buildings and enact policy and programs related to building decarbonization.
Implementing Department / Organization	Buildings Maintenance Department, Water Department, City Leadership/Management staff
Key Partners	Utility partners, SEDAC, CMAP
Potential Funding	ComEd, Nicor, City, Grants

What work has already been done?

- Both ComEd and Nicor offer incentive programs for commercial partners that purchase high energy efficiency equipment.
- Nicor offers options for renewable natural gas and works with municipal and resident partners through their Total Green program.
- Elgin has completed a baseline green house gas inventory that outlines municipal emissions.
- SEDAC offers Technical Assistance & Energy Code Training related to building projects, education and workforce training on electrification basics, decarbonization planning, and resource guidance on incentives.
- CMAP supports building electrification and decarbonization efforts within its broader climate planning and technical assistance programming.

Action Items

- Compile and track energy consumption at municipal buildings and facilities to help guide decisions on new equipment installations and retrofits.
- Collaborate with utility partners to communicate energy consumption data of city buildings to key decision-makers.
- Create a framework for timing energy retrofits that optimizes energy savings in relation to the remaining lifespan of existing systems and avoids unnecessary costs from premature upgrades.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Municipal energy consumption
- Number of energy efficiency retrofits/projects completed
- Education and outreach initiatives launched/promoted

-
- Develop a strategy for implementing decarbonization efforts beyond equipment upgrades that considers cost, collaborating with building maintenance and management staff to identify operational steps that can reduce energy use.
 - Promote and develop educational resources on energy-saving projects within municipal buildings that have been completed or are underway.

Collaborate with Utility partners to decarbonize the local grid and to advance the decarbonization of the broader multistate regional grid.

Municipalities and utilities can work together on initiatives that promote renewable energy integration, energy efficiency and grid modernization. Examples of collaborative efforts may include working together on long-term planning, large renewable energy procurement and improvements to energy storage systems.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$\$			This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement	Elgin would need to collaborate with ComEd and other utilities on decarbonization efforts and for promoting renewable energy options to residents.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Public Services, Sustainability Staff, Utility Partners		
Key Partners	ComEd, Nicor, Illinois EPA, Illinois Power Agency, local agencies promoting electrification and renewable energy programs		
Potential Funding	City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- ComEd has a commitment for 25% of their energy to come from renewable sources by 2025.
- ComEd and other utilities offer renewable energy programs.

Action Items

- Implement a municipal aggregation program.
- Promote participation in existing renewable energy programs, encouraging both the commercial sector and residents to get involved.
- Continue education and outreach initiatives with local agencies that promote renewable energy and decarbonization efforts in Elgin.
- Continue to support growth of regional renewable energy programs.
- Advocate for grid decarbonization and modernization projects, in partnership with regional and state agencies.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Percentage of renewable energy in community energy portfolio*
- Number of participants in renewable energy programs
- Education and outreach initiatives launched/promoted

*data tracked by ComEd

Promote implementation of net-zero building standards and building electrification for new commercial construction through voluntary incentives.

Programs, policies and initiatives can encourage and incentivize net-zero building standards and building electrification for new commercial construction, key components of promoting energy-efficient, sustainable urban development.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$			This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin has the authority to implement incentive programs and to update development ordinances and code.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Community Development	
Key Partners		Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), Utility Partners, Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC), ComEd, Nicor	
Potential Funding		ComEd, Nicor, City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Both ComEd and Nicor offer incentive programs for commercial partners that purchase high energy efficiency equipment.
- Several municipalities in the region, such as Kane County, Evanston and Chicago, have adopted Climate Action and Resilience Plans to reduce carbon emissions.
- SEDAC provides technical assistance related to development of energy codes.
- Cook County's Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) program provides low-cost, long-term financing for building energy efficiency projects.
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources Climate Action Plan includes a goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Action Items

- Develop building code program to promote net-zero designs.
- Explore incentives for new developments that meet net-zero and electrification standards, such as expedited permitting or density bonuses.
- Engage with regional and state partners to explore net-zero policy recommendations.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of new net-zero buildings approved
- Participation rates in incentive programs



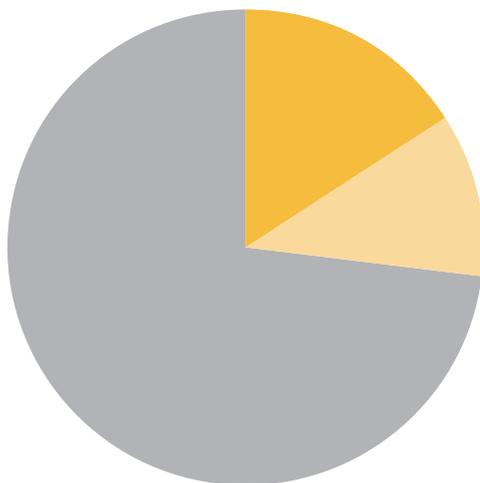
Residential Energy

Vision: Elgin’s residential buildings and neighborhoods are powered by clean, affordable and reliable energy and reflect the history and character of the entire community.

Based on Elgin’s 2023 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory, the residential energy sector is responsible for 27% of the community’s total emissions. This sector includes all types of housing—from single-family homes and duplexes to apartment buildings. Enhancing the energy efficiency of these homes through improved insulation, energy-efficient appliances and smart technologies can significantly reduce both energy use and household costs. Transitioning to clean energy sources, such as solar power, further cuts emissions while building greater resilience in Elgin’s neighborhoods.

It is essential to prioritize low-income and energy-burdened households in energy efficiency programs, as they are often hit hardest by high energy costs and the effects of climate change. By taking these steps, Elgin can protect the unique character of its neighborhoods while creating healthier, more comfortable and more affordable homes for all residents.

Community-Wide Emissions (Year 2021)



- 16% Residential Energy - Natural Gas
- 11% Residential Energy - Electricity
- 73% All other sources

190,959 MTCO₂e*

from Residential natural gas usage

140,817 MTCO₂e

from Residential electricity usage

331,775 MTCO₂e

Total residential energy usage

94 households

Participating in the Community Solar Program using 554.8 kW of solar power (as of June 2025)

2,404 MTCO₂e

from Municipal street lights & traffic signals usage

*metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e).

Existing Programs

- **Elgin Community Solar Program:** Allows residents to get a portion of their electricity from a local solar installation, which helps reduce their monthly electric bills with solar without installing solar panels on their house or business.
- **Zero-Emission Yard Equipment Rebates:** Annual rebate program for Elgin residents who purchase electric yard equipment from an Elgin retailer.
- **Energy Efficiency Rebates:** ComEd and Nicor both offer various energy efficiency-related rebates to homeowners in Elgin.
- **Illinois Solar for All and other State programs:** Help expand access to solar and other renewable energy sources for households across the state.

Key Stakeholders

- **ComEd:** Electric utility company that serves northern Illinois, including Elgin.
- **Nicor Gas (Nicor):** Natural gas utility company that serves northern Illinois, including Elgin.
- **Illinois Solar for All:** State program that makes solar energy more affordable for low-income residents.
- **Local community-based organizations:** Gail Borden Public Library, local churches, neighborhood associations, advocacy groups, etc.
- **Elgin Community College (ECC):** Has studies in Energy Management and Renewable Energy, that provides curriculum related to the business of renewable energy for residential and commercial buildings.

Action Summary Table

Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
Promote programs that educate residents—homeowners, renters and landlords—on energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy retrofits.	★ +	\$	●	
Promote financial assistance programs that empower residents to undertake energy efficiency improvements, with an emphasis on supporting low-income and energy-burdened households.	★ +	\$\$	●	
Continue to pursue incentives and policies for improving residential building efficiency.	★ +	\$\$	●●	
Promote community renewable energy programs for residents.	★ +	\$\$	●	
Continue to implement Residential Area Design Guidelines as defined in the Elgin Comprehensive Plan, especially guidelines related to pedestrian and bike infrastructure and landscaping and tree cover guidelines.*	★	\$	●	

*Denotes an action not requiring a full Implementation Blueprint.

Co-Benefits
 GHG Emissions Reduction
 Infrastructure Resilience
 Natural Resilience
 Social Resilience
 Equity & Empowerment

Promote programs that educate residents—homeowners, renters and landlords—on energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy retrofits.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement		Elgin has the authority to support existing programming.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Sustainability Staff, Communications Department, Community Development, Neighborhood Services (311 staff)	
Key Partners		Gail Borden Public Library District, Nicor, ComEd, Mayors Metropolitan Caucus, Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC), Elgin Community College (ECC), Elgin Sustainability Commission, local advocacy groups, Illinois Green Alliance	
Potential Funding		Grants, Utility Partners, City	

What work has already been done?

- Utility partners provide residential energy efficiency programs that include home energy audits, discounted efficiency upgrades and access to lists of qualified contractors for implementing improvements.
- Nicor Energy Efficiency programs have served over 38,000 participants in Elgin over the lifetime of the program.
- SCARCE (School & Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education) offers a variety of educational programs focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy. These initiatives are designed to engage students, educators and community members in understanding and implementing sustainable energy practices.

Action Items

- Develop an informational campaign that communicates benefits of energy efficiency upgrades—including cost savings, available financial incentives and financing options, grants and rebates—to homeowners, renters and landlords, with the goal of driving widespread participation.
- Collaborate with trusted community hubs to engage residents and provide information on energy efficiency and renewable energy. Engagement may include hosting workshops, demonstrations or bringing in industry experts for a panel discussion or informational presentation.
- Collaborate with local utility programs to offer free and low-cost home energy audit options. Encourage audits as a first step in identifying impactful efficiency improvements.
- Partner with workforce development organizations to promote career pathways in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of educational campaigns and programming on residential energy efficiency

- Partner with a regional agency to centralize and share information on energy efficiency programs, including financing options, upgrade pathways, vetted contractors and vendors and user-friendly guides to help residents access funding and connect with qualified professionals.
- Partner with the Elgin Historic District to educate residents about energy-efficiency and solar panel related regulations in the historic district and promote participation in the Community Solar program.

Promote financial assistance programs that empower residents to undertake energy efficiency improvements, with an emphasis on supporting low-income and energy-burdened households.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$			This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement		Elgin can promote existing assistance programs for residents and prioritize resources for energy-burdened households (households that spend a disproportionately high percentage of their income on energy costs).	
Implementing Department / Organization		Sustainability staff	
Key Partners		Elgin Hispanic Network, Centro de Información, ComEd, Nicor, Citizen’s Utility Board, Gail Borden Public Library District, Cook County, Kane County, local realtor groups, churches and education institutions, Elgin Sustainability Commission, local advocacy groups, Illinois Green Alliance, Elgin Historic District	
Potential Funding		ComEd, Nicor, City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- ComEd offers energy audits and other efficiency assessments for homeowners.
- Some local organizations, like local churches and Centro de Información, already work to promote residential energy efficiency/utility assistance programs.
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding in Cook and Kane Counties.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of households that complete ComEd energy audits*
- Number of educational campaigns and programs sharing information for residents to make energy efficiency improvements

*data tracked by ComEd

Action Items

- Identify and map neighborhoods in Elgin with energy-burdened households.
- Collaborate with trusted community hubs to engage residents and provide information on finance assistance for energy efficiency improvements.
- Partner with a regional agency to centralize and share information about incentive programs for residential energy efficiency, including financing options, upgrade pathways, vetted contractors and vendors and user-friendly guides to help residents access incentives, funding and connect with qualified professionals.
- Meet with local agencies and residents to identify barriers to accessing existing financial assistance programs.
- Continue to educate the community about available efficiency upgrade programs and collaborate with trusted community-based organizations to help distribute information.

Continue to pursue incentives to promote higher residential building efficiency.

Incentives should encourage participation through voluntary means and action.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●●		This action is supported by community input.

Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin can start and promote incentive programs.
Implementing Department / Organization	Community Development, Sustainability Staff
Key Partners	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), ComEd, Kane County, Cook County, Slipstream, Elgin Sustainability Commission, local advocacy groups, Illinois Green Alliance
Potential Funding	Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing, ComEd, CMAP, City, Grants

What work has already been done?

- Several municipalities in the region, such as Kane County and Chicago, have adopted Climate Action Plans that include goals and strategies for promoting residential building and energy efficiency.
- Elgin has various energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for residents, like the Community Solar Program.
- ComEd and others have programs to support residential energy efficiency.
- Agencies that help municipalities evaluate energy efficiency policies, provide technical assistance, data and resources to promote sustainability at the local level in the Chicago area include: Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Center for Neighborhood Technology, CMAP, Illinois Energy Conservation Authority, ComEd, Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability, Illinois Green Alliance and American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

Action Items

- Pursue incentives to cover the incremental cost of building to the Illinois Stretch Energy Code.
- Review zoning code to identify opportunities where building energy efficiency can be incentivized.
- Partner with neighboring municipalities and participate in technical assistance programs to gain knowledge on best practices that strengthen energy efficiency policies.
- Assess the feasibility of implementing a residential financing program to support energy efficiency upgrades.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of residential energy efficiency incentives and policies implemented

Promote community renewable energy programs for residents.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$			This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can promote programs for residents.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Sustainability Staff, Neighborhood Services	
Key Partners		Illinois Solar for All, ComEd, Nicor, local community based organizations	
Potential Funding		State and federal tax credits (availability subject to change), state incentive programs, City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Community solar programs allow individuals, businesses and organizations to access renewable energy by subscribing to shared off-site solar projects, eliminating the need to install panels on their own property.
 - The Illinois Solar for All program provides access to solar energy for income-eligible households and nonprofit organizations by offering incentives that make solar installations more affordable and help reduce energy costs.
 - Illinois Shines is a statewide program that lowers the cost of solar installations for residential, commercial and nonprofit customers by providing performance-based incentives that reward clean energy production.
- City of Elgin has a Gold-Level designation in the SolSmart program, which has helped reduce barriers to solar energy growth in the community.

Action Items

- Review existing renewable energy incentive and technical assistance programs available to Elgin residents.
- Partner with a regional agency to centralize and share information about existing programs for residents.
- Collaborate with trusted community hubs to engage and educate residents about solar energy and renewable energy programs. Use existing educational resources to support engagement efforts.
- Meet with stakeholders to identify barriers to Community Solar participation and explore opportunities to increase community involvement.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of educational campaigns and programs sharing information on renewable energy programs for residents
- Number of building permits issued for solar panels
- Number of participants in Community Solar Programming

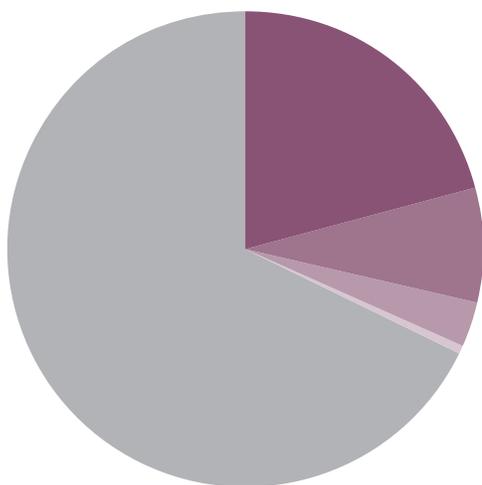


Transportation & Mobility

Vision: Elgin’s transportation systems and infrastructure align with community needs, are affordable to users, minimize pollution and create safe, accessible connections between home, work, learning and other services.

Transportation accounts for 33% of Elgin’s community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, stemming from personal and commercial vehicles, the City fleet and other modes of transport. Reducing these emissions is essential to improving air quality and advancing Elgin’s sustainability goals. This means creating a transportation system that is more connected, affordable and accessible for everyone. Shifting toward active transportation—like biking and walking—can significantly reduce car dependence, easing traffic congestion and cutting pollution. By investing in safe, well-connected infrastructure for these alternatives, Elgin can build a healthier, more vibrant community. Within the City’s own operations, the municipal fleet makes up 6% of total municipal emissions, with employee commutes adding another 1%, highlighting opportunities for targeted improvements.

Community-Wide Emissions (Year 2021)



- 21% Transportation - On-road Gasoline
- 8% Transportation - On-road Diesel
- 3% Transportation - Off-road
- 0.55% Transportation - Rail & Public Transit
- 68% All other sources

353,144 MTCO₂e*
from Community on-road vehicle miles traveled

41,193 MTCO₂e
from Off-road sources

6,835 MTCO₂e
from Rail

2,339 MTCO₂e
from Municipal fleet vehicle miles traveled

1,672 MTCO₂e
from Public transit vehicle miles traveled

*metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e).

Progress to Date

- 2008** - Elgin's first Bikeway Master Plan was adopted.
- 2014** - Sidewalk Gap and Transit Stop Study completed.
- 2015** - First public EV charging station installed at the Center Street Parking Deck.
- 2023** - Elgin joins the Mayor's Metropolitan Caucus EV Readiness Program.
- 2023** - Three EVs are added to the City fleet.
- 2023** - Additional public EV charging station installed near the Municipal Complex.
- 2025** - Development of a Comprehensive Active Mobility Plan begins.
- 2025** - Two EV trucks are added to the Public Works fleet.

Key Stakeholders

- Pace Bus: The transit organization that provides bus service in Elgin.
- Metra: The regional rail system that connects Elgin to other parts of the Chicago region.
- Illinois Department of Transportation: State agency that oversees transportation infrastructure and services.
- Kane County Government
- Cook County Government
- Local bicyclist and pedestrian organizations (such as Elgin Community Bikes, and the Judson Bike Shop)

Elgin is continuously upgrading bike lane infrastructure throughout the City, through projects like restriping and repainting bike lanes.

Action Summary Table

Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
Identify improvements for bus stops along all major routes to encourage use of public transit and work with local agencies to ensure facilities are maintained and accessible.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	👤 🏠
Assess the feasibility of transitioning the municipal fleet and contracted services to zero-emission vehicles. Pursue opportunities that align with the recommendations from the fleet assessment.	★	\$\$\$	● ● ●	☁️ 🏠
Explore opportunities to develop transportation demand management (TDM) incentives and programs.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	☁️ 👤 🧑🏿
Continue to encourage new development to include electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and bike parking and storage.	★ +	\$	●	☁️ 🏠
Launch an educational campaign to raise awareness and promote the benefits of electric and hybrid vehicles.	★ +	\$\$	●	☁️ 👤
Pursue policy, projects, initiatives and programs that foster a walkable, bikeable and transit-supportive community.	★ +	\$\$\$	● ● ●	☁️ 👤 🏠

Co-Benefits
☁️ GHG Emissions Reduction
🏠 Infrastructure Resilience
🌊 Natural Resilience
👤 Social Resilience
🧑🏿 Equity & Empowerment

Identify improvements for bus stops along all major routes to encourage use of public transit and work with local agencies to ensure facilities are maintained and accessible.

Examples of improvements at bus stops include providing seating and shelter to protect riders from various weather elements. One challenge related to bus stop improvements is keeping up with daily maintenance needs, such as removing trash and overgrown vegetation and shoveling snow in the winter to help with accessibility.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●●	 	This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin can partner with local agencies to identify and implement improvements for bus stops and shelters.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Pace Bus, Community Development, Sustainability Staff		
Key Partners	Pace Bus, Kane County, Cook County		
Potential Funding	City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- Elgin is in the process of developing an Active Mobility Plan and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan that will create a path towards improving active transportation options across Elgin.
- Kane County Climate Action Implementation Plan includes strategies to increase public transit commuter ridership.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of bus stops or shelters improved

Action Items

- Identify bus stops located within urban heat islands and/or in areas vulnerable to climate-related hazards. Prioritize these locations for upgrades to enhance community resilience.
- Collaborate with Kane County to implement stop and shelter improvements.
- Work with transit agencies to identify opportunities to improve stop accessibility.
- Work with adjacent property owners to provide daily/general maintenance of stops/shelter facilities (adopt a shelter program to support the day to day needs like shoveling in the winter, removing trash).
- Once complete, pursue opportunities to advance the recommended improvements outlined in the Active Mobility Plan.

Assess the feasibility of transitioning the municipal fleet and contracted services to zero-emission vehicles. Pursue opportunities that align with the recommendations from the fleet assessment.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$\$	● ● ●		This action is supported by community input.

Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin is responsible for making decisions regarding the municipal fleet's needs and purchases.
Implementing Department / Organization	Public Works, Purchasing, Fire, Police, Neighborhood Services, Parks and Facilities
Key Partners	ComEd, Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus, Kane County, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Potential Funding	ComEd incentives programs, City, Grants

What work has already been done?

- The city has placed hybrid vehicles in the fleet within both Community Development and Neighborhood Services. The Public Works Department plans to place electric vehicle (EV) pick-up trucks in service.
- A Fleet Assessment for the City was completed in 2024. Public Works staff routinely look for opportunities to improve efficiency of vehicles. Staff also look for options to use bio-diesel fuel.
- Elgin participated in the second cohort of the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus EV Readiness Program from 2023 to 2024 and received a Bronze award.
- Parks and Facilities staff are reviewing the use of electric equipment for maintenance needs, and use electric where feasible.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of alternative fuel vehicles in municipal fleet, broken down by fuel type

Action Items

- Continue to implement recommendations from the fleet assessment.
- Prioritize the purchase of hybrids and EVs for the city fleet, where feasible.
- Conduct energy assessments at municipal facilities to evaluate readiness for EV charging infrastructure and inform planning for EV adoption.
- Review recommended actions from the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus EV Readiness program checklist to consider for implementation.
- Continue to participate in pilot projects or demonstrations to test various EV types and charging solutions when opportunities arise.

Explore opportunities to develop transportation demand management (TDM) incentives and programs.

TDM incentives are designed to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles by encouraging more efficient, sustainable travel options. These strategies aim to move more people using fewer vehicles through alternatives such as public transit, carpooling, vanpooling, cycling, walking, micromobility, telecommuting and flexible work schedules. Incentive programs can include prizes or rewards programs for companies or individuals that choose travel alternatives. Common TDM programs include free or discounted transit passes, employee shuttle services, telework arrangements, secure bicycle parking, scooter and bike share programs and innovative parking management solutions.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement	Elgin can collaborate with partners to promote programs.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Sustainability Staff, City Manager's Office, Community Development, IT		
Key Partners	Pace Bus, Metra, large employers in Elgin, Downtown Neighborhood Association, Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, Active Transportation Alliance (ATA)		
Potential Funding	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), IDOT, City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- Elgin is developing an Active Mobility Plan (anticipated to be complete in 2026)
- Several municipalities in the Chicago area offer a variety of TDM incentives, including Chicago, DuPage County, Evanston, Naperville, Oak Park and Schaumburg.
- CMAP and ATA developed an Employer TDM Toolkit for local businesses.
- Chicago's Bike Commuter Challenge (organized by ATA), encourages individuals and organizations throughout the Chicagoland area to opt for biking as a mode of commuting, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing environmental impact.

Action Items

- Identify and explore opportunities for the City of Elgin to establish TDM incentives for its staff.
- Collaborate with Kane County and neighboring municipalities to promote regional transit options.
- Promote TDM best practices to Elgin employers.
- Explore partnerships with local transit agencies to develop TDM incentive programs.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of TDM initiatives

Continue to encourage new development to include electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and bike parking and storage.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement		Elgin can explore the development of incentive programs.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Community Development	
Key Partners		Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), professional/advocacy organizations (such as the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, Ride Illinois and Active Transportation Alliance), Illinois Department of Energy	
Potential Funding		State and Federal funding programs, City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Elgin has installed public Level 2 EV charging stations.
- The permitting process for installing EV chargers has been streamlined, including waiving permitting fees.
- Municipal code Section 19.45.088, passed by City Council in December of 2023, gives provisions for EV parking and charging equipment.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of new developments with EV chargers and/or bike parking/storage

Action Items

- Continue to explore zoning code updates that would incentivize installation of EV charging infrastructure, particularly for non-residential developments.
- Continue to evaluate development requirements for bike parking and update them based on recommendations from professional organizations.
- Distribute bike parking and EV charging design guidelines to developers.
- Promote incentive programs to support the installation of EV charging infrastructure, like the ComEd Make-Ready rebate program and incentives available through the IEPA Driving a Cleaner Illinois Program.

Launch an educational campaign to raise awareness and promote the benefits of electric and hybrid vehicles.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin has the authority to start educational campaigns.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Sustainability staff, Communications Staff, Neighborhood Services, Public Works	
Key Partners		Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), ComEd, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Sustainability Commission	
Potential Funding		ComEd Incentives, IEPA rebates, City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- In 2023, Elgin participated in the second cohort of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus EV Readiness program.
- Elgin has existing public Level 2 EV chargers.
- New construction for residential homes are required to be built to an 'EV capable' standard, for ease of at-home charging installation.
- Several organizations in the Chicago area host "ride-and-drive" events where individuals can test drive various vehicles, including electric and hybrid models. Notable examples include:
 - Chicago Drives Electric: An annual event organized by the Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition (CACC).
 - Green Drives Conference & Expo: Hosted by the Illinois Alliance for Clean Transportation.

Action Items

- Identify a regional partner to centralize and share information on electric vehicles (EVs), including financial incentives and current public charging locations.
- Collaborate with trusted community hubs to engage residents and share EV-related information.
- Work with regional agencies to host events that allow residents to test drive electric and hybrid vehicles.
- Pursue opportunities to expand and improve public EV charging infrastructure.
- Collaborate with state agencies to advance EV adoption, with targeted messaging for residents of multi-family buildings who may have limited access to at-home charging.
- Develop targeted outreach and resources to encourage EV adoption among businesses and commercial fleets.
- Promote EV incentive programs offered by ComEd, the Illinois EPA (IEPA) and other relevant organizations.
- Offer both in-person and on-demand presentations to provide residents with accessible EV education.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of educational campaigns or events promoting EVs

Pursue policy, projects, initiatives and programs that foster a walkable, bikeable and transit-supportive community.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$\$	●●●		This action is supported by community input.

Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin can develop and launch policy, projects, initiatives and programs. Development projects may be dependent on other government authorities
Implementing Department / Organization	Sustainability Staff, Community Development, Communications Staff, Neighborhood Services, Public Works
Key Partners	Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), ComEd, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Elgin Community Bikes, Judson Bikes, Active Transportation Alliance, Ride Illinois, Elgin Sustainability Commission, CMAP
Potential Funding	ComEd Incentives, IEPA rebates, City, Grants

What work has already been done?

- Elgin is developing an Active Mobility Plan (anticipated to be complete in 2026).
- The City has completed various plans that identified pedestrian and bike improvements (i.e. 2008 Bikeway Master Plan Map, 2014 Sidewalk Gap and Transit Stop Study, etc.)
- Elgin Community Bikes regularly hosts local social rides and events.
- Ride Illinois offers educational bike safety resources.
- Local municipalities in Chicagoland suburbs host bike rodeo events to teach youth bike safety and encourage biking.

Action Items

- Pursue becoming a League of American Bicyclists’ Bike-Friendly Community.
- Identify gaps within the bicycle and pedestrian network and prioritize improvements to create a more complete and safe active transportation system.
- Pursue projects that improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. This may include opportunities to calm traffic, improve bike infrastructure and implement educational campaigns on safe commuting habits.
- Work with local organizations to coordinate community events focused on promoting biking, walking (i.e. bike-to-work days, social rides, open streets, bike rodeos, fix-it clinics).

- As part of its annual pavement marking program, the City restripes more than one million linear feet of roadway each year, including bike lanes, crosswalks, center lines, lane lines, edge lines, turn bays, railroad crosshatches and stop bars. In 2023 and 2024, the City launched a pilot project to enhance bicycle visibility and safety by painting bike lanes solid green along N. Edison Avenue/Wing Park Boulevard (between Larkin Avenue and Lawrence Avenue) and on E. Chicago Street and Highland Avenue (between Center Street and Illinois Route 31) in the central business district.
- Continue to promote opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) like those plans, policies, and land uses identified within the National Street Station Area Plan and the Chicago Street Station Area Planning Study, both developed in cooperation with the RTA (Regional Transit Authority), Metra, and Pace.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of bike or pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects completed



Sustainable Resource Consumption

Vision: Elgin is a community of mindful consumption, where raw materials and water resources are protected for future use, waste generation is minimized and opportunities to use waste material for new purposes are encouraged.

While solid waste contributes only a small share to Elgin’s total greenhouse gas emissions—approximately 1% of community-wide emissions and less than 1% of municipal emissions—its broader environmental impact is significant. Waste management and consumption practices affect the preservation of raw materials, water resources and the health of local economies. Strengthening services such as recycling and organics collections, supporting local and sustainable businesses and thoughtfully planning the use of public and community spaces are key steps toward more sustainable resource use.

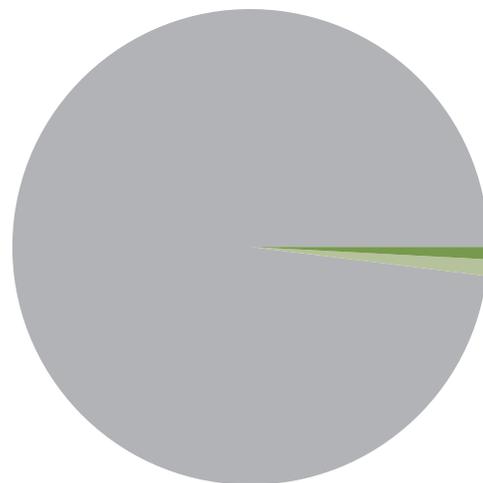
In 2023, the City of Elgin surveyed over 2,000 residents to identify challenges and opportunities for improving its waste, recycling and composting programs.

92% of survey respondents indicated that they would like additional information about special waste-collection events and services in Elgin. Respondents reported desire for clearer recycling guidelines, adding recycling info on bins or via magnets and collaborations with community partners.

90% of respondents report engaging in weekly recycling. Respondents also indicated expanded recycling options were likely to be engaged and effective.

52% of survey respondents were interested in participating in combined yard waste and organics collection. Survey respondents also indicated a desire for expanded organics services.

Community-Wide Emissions (Year 2021)



- 1% Solid Waste
- 1% Water and Wastewater
- 98% All other sources



Progress to Date

- 2016** - First annual Pumpkin Smash event to educate residents about composting practices.
- 2022** - Annual rain barrel and compost bin sale is re-started post-pandemic.
- 2023** - Completed a community-wide waste and recycling survey.
- 2023** - Terracycle boxes were added to the Downtown Elgin Market for the season.
- 2025** - Elgin begins free yard waste and organics curbside compost collection.

Key Stakeholders

- Lakeshore Recycling Services: Elgin’s newly contracted waste, recycling and organics collection service.
- Downtown Neighborhood Association: local non-profit that works to support and revitalize downtown Elgin; coordinates Made in Elgin and Downtown Elgin Market.
- Local organizations including Wild Ones, food pantries, community gardens, etc.
- Local businesses and agencies that specialize in repairing recycling, composting, repurposing and/or reusing items, including Midwest Compost, Junkluggers, Elgin Recycling, Habitat for Humanity Restore, local makers/ entrepreneurs, etc.

Action Summary Table

Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
Launch a water conservation educational campaign.	★ +	\$	●	
Develop and establish a "buy local" program and marketing campaign that promotes procuring food and other products from local food producers and Elgin-based businesses.	★ +	\$	●	
Minimize waste generation and improve recycling and organics collection programming.	★ +	\$	●●	
Collaborate regionally to promote food waste recovery initiatives.	★ +	\$\$	●●	
Promote the repurposing and sharing of underutilized or vacant building spaces and resources among local businesses and organizations.	★ +	\$\$	●●	

Co-Benefits



GHG Emissions Reduction



Infrastructure Resilience



Natural Resilience



Social Resilience



Equity & Empowerment

Launch a water conservation educational campaign.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	●	💧	This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin has the authority to start educational campaigns.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Public Services, Sustainability Staff, Parks and Recreation	
Key Partners		American Waterworks Association - Illinois Chapter, Fox Valley Water Reclamation District, Wild Ones, Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Fox, Forest Preserve District of Kane County, neighborhood associations, Tyler Creek Watershed Coalition, U-46 School District	
Potential Funding		Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Department of Natural Resources, City, Grants, AWWA	

What work has already been done?

- The American Waterworks Association - Illinois Chapter has a water ambassador program with existing water conservation education resources.
- The Fox Valley Water Reclamation District has educational information and programs about water quality, which might be complementary to conservation messaging.
- Wild Ones "Start in Your Yard" resources and native plant sales can be good resources for yard water conservation practices.
- Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) is a regional program that focuses on promoting the sustainable use and protection of the Great Lakes and surrounding environments, particularly in Illinois and Indiana. IISG works in partnership with universities, local governments and community organizations to provide research, outreach and educational resources related to water quality, habitat restoration, climate change and other environmental issues.

Action Items

- Compile and centralize available educational resources on residential water conservation.
- Develop messaging and materials that address the complementary relationship between water conservation and water quality.
- Leverage existing communication channels to disseminate information on water conservation and its link to water quality issues.
- Explore water conservation strategies that can be promoted for commercial and industrial uses, like golf courses and how to promote water conservation in that sector.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of participants in water conservation education events/activities

Develop and establish a “buy local” program and marketing campaign that promotes procuring food and other products from local food producers and Elgin-based businesses.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement		Elgin can establish programs or partnerships to promote buying local food and products.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Community Development Department, Sustainability Staff	
Key Partners		Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA), local businesses, Elgin Development Group, Shared Harvest Co-op, All Grass Farms, Klein’s Farm and Garden Market, educational institutions with culinary programs, local food pantries, local community gardens	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- DNA has an incubator and other small business assistance programs.
- DNA leads ‘Made In Elgin’, a program that highlights production based businesses in Elgin. Programming includes signage, a punch card rewards program and a pop-up market for locally made items.
- DNA’s Friday Markets connect consumers with local farmers and food producers. The market supports local makers and growers, promotes environmental stewardship and builds a vibrant marketplace for local food.
- Local community gardens donate produce to local food pantries.
- Illinois Grown is a program by the Illinois Department of Agriculture that identifies products grown in Illinois or containing at least one ingredient sourced from the state.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of city/cultural events featuring local businesses
- Number of promotional campaigns supporting local businesses

Action Items

- Continue to partner with the Chamber/EDG to centralize information about local Elgin businesses, farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs and other organizations that support local businesses.
- Continue to work with the Downtown Elgin Market to promote the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits at the market.
- Continue work to identify and support programs that lower financial barriers to purchasing fresh, locally produced food at farmers markets and other community-based food outlets.

Minimize waste generation and improve recycling and organics collection programming.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	● ●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can share information and existing resources. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations would be needed to support the repurposing of underutilized or vacant spaces.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Community Development, Cultural Arts & Special Events	
Key Partners		Elgin Development Group, Downtown Neighborhood Association, Chamber of Commerce, Side Street Studios	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- 2023 City of Elgin Waste, Recycling and Organics Community Survey.
- Elgin's provides weekly curbside recycling, organics and waste, plus household hazardous and electronic waste, curbside leaf collection and textile recycling.
- Annual 'Pumpkin Smash' compost collection event.
- Yard Waste and Organics stickers no longer required, to reduce participation barriers for recycling.
- City provides continuous community education on local resources to properly recycle or dispose of items.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Data on curbside waste, recycling and compost collection
- Number of households with an organics cart
- Number of educational campaigns

Action Items

- Continue to work with LRS to improve community engagement and education on recycling and organics services.
- Explore programs that manage hard to recycle items, such as Styrofoam.
- Strengthen waste education efforts, with focused messaging on the benefits of recycling, composting, waste reduction and available local resources.
- Identify opportunities to reduce the use and distribution of plastic and single-use items in Elgin.
- Explore and advance waste, recycling and organics initiatives that support a circular economy.
- Support community cleanup events and related public engagement programs.

Collaborate regionally to promote food waste recovery initiatives.

Examples of initiatives include community fridges and other food rescue programs.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	● ●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement	Elgin would need collaboration with regional partners and support food waste recovery programs for this action to be successfully implemented.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Sustainability Staff, Neighborhood Services		
Key Partners	SCARCE, Elgin Development Group, neighborhood associations, local food pantries and food based businesses		
Potential Funding	City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- Elgin's residential curbside includes an organics collection service.
- The City of Elgin worked with SCARCE to plan Pumpkin Smash, an annual event that collects pumpkins to compost.
- Various community gardens in the Elgin area donate extra produce to local food pantries.
- Food recovery programs have seen success in other communities, like the Evanston Community Fridge and Indivisible Aurora's Community Fridge Project.
- Mini pantries in public spaces - where people can take or donate items such as food and hygiene products – have been successfully implemented by local community agencies in Elgin.

Action Items

- Explore and gain insights from Chicago-area food recovery and mutual aid organizations.
- Develop a comprehensive map of local food resources, such as community gardens, pantries, pop-up markets, co-ops and farmers markets. This may include collaboration with trusted community hubs to engage residents, centralize information and promote resources through various communication channels.
- Explore potential partnerships with food waste recovery organizations that link businesses with surplus food to support food pantries and other community initiatives, as well as food-waste reduction apps.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of households with an organics cart
- Map of local food resources created
- Number of partnerships or initiatives focused on reducing food waste (e.g. pumpkin smash, compost bin sales, partnerships with food waste recovery organizations)

Promote the repurposing and sharing of underutilized or vacant building spaces and resources among local businesses and organizations.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can share information and existing resources. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations would be needed to support the repurposing of underutilized or vacant spaces.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Community Development, Cultural Arts & Special Events	
Key Partners		Elgin Development Group, Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA), Chamber of Commerce, Side Street Studios	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- The City has a TIF program that provides financial assistance towards the rehabilitation of buildings in the TIF District.
- The Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) is working to provide an incubator space for new local businesses, in addition to resources for new businesses.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of participants in DNA incubator program
- Number of vacant spaces repurposed or utilized*
- The Downtown Neighborhood Association maintains a list of available commercial properties on their website.

*data tracked by others

Action Items

- Work with the DNA to continue to identify and map underutilized or vacant building spaces and notify local agencies with need for space.
- Continue to collaborate with the DNA, Chamber of Commerce, and community agencies on opportunities to repurpose and fill vacant buildings.
- Continue to leverage City events to transform open and vacant spaces into dynamic, community-centered destinations.
- Continue to address the needs of local businesses and organizations seeking affordable event and workspace options that foster resource sharing.



Sequestration & Biodiversity

Vision: The Elgin community respects and celebrates the inherent value of its natural resources and biodiversity and prioritizes protection and restoration of these resources.

Healthy natural ecosystems—including sustainable agriculture and responsible land use—are vital for regulating the climate and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Natural areas and green infrastructure, such as wetlands, forests and urban green spaces, help buffer climate impacts by absorbing excess rainfall, reducing flood risk and cooling urban areas. These strategies not only support biodiversity but also create opportunities for economic growth and community development.

Elgin's forests and trees were estimated to
remove 6,802 MTCO₂e*
from the atmosphere



*metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e).

Source: Elgin, IL 2021 Inventory of Community and Local Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Progress to Date

- Adopt-a-Garden Program: Coordinates residents to help plant and care for flowerbeds, trees and planters in downtown Elgin.
- Public Tree Planting: Hundreds of trees planted in parks and on City property each year and a recent grant will enhance tree canopy at Lords Park.
- Tree Bank Planting Program: Residents can register to have tree planted in the parkway at no cost.
- Stormwater Basin Retrofits: Retrofits existing stormwater basins and installs green infrastructure where feasible.
- Private Property Drainage Assistance: Helps residents resolve stormwater drainage issues on their property, including installation of rain gardens.

Key Stakeholders

- Kane County Government
- Elgin Public Schools: for instance, Elgin High School's Environmental program partners with the broader community on initiatives related to environmentalism and sustainability.
- Kane County Forest Preserve District: Manages a network of nature preserves across Kane County, in addition to providing education and outreach to residents on natural resource topics.
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP): Regional planning agency for northeastern Illinois.
- Local agencies such as Wild Ones, Conservation Foundation, and neighborhood associations.

Action Summary Table

Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
Promote the use of low-impact development and green infrastructure, particularly in natural areas with sensitive environmental features.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	
Develop and launch a native pollinator garden program that supports habitat and pathways for pollinators.	★ +	\$\$	●	
Integrate incentives for mitigation measures and buffering strategies into development codes to better protect waterways, floodways and flood-prone areas.	★ +	\$	●	
Convert vacant lots and buildings lots into green spaces.	★ +	\$\$	● ● ●	
Maintain a tree inventory, planting and management plan and adopt a tree preservation ordinance.*	★	\$\$	● ●	

*Denotes an action not requiring a full Implementation Blueprint.

Co-Benefits
 GHG Emissions Reduction
  Infrastructure Resilience
  Natural Resilience
  Social Resilience
  Equity & Empowerment

Promote the use of low-impact development and green infrastructure, particularly in natural areas with sensitive environmental features.

Examples of low-impact development and green infrastructure projects include bioretention basins, rain gardens, permeable pavement and green roofs.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can promote low-impact development and green infrastructure by providing educational programming and incentives (financial or through development ordinance).	
Implementing Department / Organization		Community Development, Public Services, Parks and Recreation	
Key Partners		Forest District, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), other regional forest districts	
Potential Funding		Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), regional technical assistance funding, City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Elgin has various existing green infrastructure projects like permeable pavers and bioswales along several streets at the Sports Complex and rain gardens in the SWAN neighborhood.
- Elgin won a green infrastructure award for the Airport Road basin project and has received funding from IEPA for other retention basin retrofits.
- Elgin launched an educational initiative to promote native plantings and sustainable stormwater basin practices, aiming to expand green infrastructure in community gathering spaces.
- CMAP provides technical assistance and resources to help with implementation of green infrastructure.

Action Items

- Retrofit stormwater retention basins and explore opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure on both city-owned and private properties.
- Pursue grant funding opportunities to support implementation of green infrastructure projects.
- Promote rain gardens as an eligible project type for Elgin's Private Property Drainage Assistance Program.
- Develop and distribute educational materials to raise community awareness about Elgin's existing green infrastructure, highlighting the benefits of native plants, the aesthetic and functional value of green spaces and best practices for maintenance.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of green infrastructure projects completed
 - Number of education events and campaigns to promote green infrastructure
- To engage residents, create an interactive map showcasing green infrastructure projects throughout the city.
 - Partner with local realtors to provide new homeowners with resources and information on the importance and upkeep of green infrastructure.
 - Plan the installation of green infrastructure projects in recreational areas.
 - Incorporate informative signage in public areas with green infrastructure to raise awareness and educate visitors—such as native plant labels and QR codes that provide easy access to details about the plant species, environmental benefits and maintenance practices.
 - Promote technical assistance and resource programs for implementing green infrastructure.
 - Continue to partner with local and regional organizations to expand native plantings throughout the community.
 - Continue to promote cluster development and Low Impact development as a land planning approaches to preserve natural resources.

Develop and launch a native pollinator garden program that supports habitat and pathways for pollinators.

Programming should be designed to enhance habitats and support pathways for pollinators.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$			This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin has the authority to implement programming that supports pollinator habitats.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Parks and Recreation, Public Services, Sustainability staff		
Key Partners	Wild Ones, Kane County Forest District, Elgin High School Environmental Program, Larkin High School Environmental Science Courses, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), University of Illinois Extension		
Potential Funding	City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- In 2008, the Northeast Neighborhood Association (NENA), in partnership with the City, transformed a vacant lot into a butterfly garden, which the organization has maintained ever since.
- City Parks and Recreation staff work with Wild Ones to improve public areas with Native Plants.
- City efforts have included Wing Park staff putting in pollinator and wild flower gardens, transferring space into natives at Jack Cook Park and purposefully leaving some areas in the downtown to grow milkweed.
- The Sherman Natural Prairie and Community Garden maintains prairie land on hospital property.
- Several local organizations—such as Wild Ones, the Kane County Forest Preserve District and the Gail Borden Public Library—host annual native plant sales and offer educational resources on pollinator-friendly gardening to support biodiversity and sustainable landscaping practices.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of pollinator habitat areas Elgin maintains

Action Items

- Create a map that identifies existing pollinator gardens and habitats in Elgin.
- Launch a social media campaign to promote native pollinator habitat resources. An example could be recognition of pollinator-friendly gardens and native plants in the community.
- Add information about native pollinator habitats to the Elgin Sustainability website.
- Continue to identify and explore opportunities to support maintenance and expansion of native pollinator habitats within Elgin’s public spaces.
- Continue to identify and explore opportunities to support local native pollinator gardening initiatives.
- Continue to integrate native pollinator habitats into green infrastructure projects where feasible.

Integrate incentives for mitigation measures and buffering strategies into development codes to better protect waterways, floodways and flood-prone areas.

Efforts to address waterways, floodways and flood-prone areas will help reduce flooding risks, enhance water quality and enhance resiliency of the community.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can make changes to the zoning code and other city ordinances.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Public Services, Community Development	
Key Partners		Kane County, Cook County, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), Fox River Water Reclamation District	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Elgin's development codes discourage redevelopment in the floodplain.
- Elgin has adopted the Kane County Stormwater Ordinance, which establishes comprehensive guidelines for stormwater management, focusing on flood prevention, water quality, and environmental protection.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of wetland and floodway conservation projects and initiatives
- Updates to development codes related to waterways, floodways and flood-prone areas

Action Items

- Review current development codes to assess existing regulations for flood mitigation and buffering along waterways.
- Review existing technical resources and best practices for flood mitigation in ordinances and consider potential updates or additions to Elgin's zoning code.
- Explore development incentives that encourage more stringent design guidelines for projects located within or near the floodplain and other flood-prone areas.
- Promote and incentivize the integration of green infrastructure and low-impact development principles throughout the development process.

Convert vacant lots and buildings into green spaces.

Vacant lots refer to parcels of land that are currently undeveloped, unoccupied or not actively in use. In general, a vacant lot is an underutilized or empty piece of land, often located within an urban area.

Green spaces, on the other hand, are areas of land covered with vegetation such as trees, gardens or pollinator-friendly habitats, specifically designated for recreational, aesthetic, environmental or ecological purposes. These spaces offer numerous benefits to urban environments, including improved air quality, mitigated urban heat islands, enhanced biodiversity, stormwater management solutions, climate resilience, areas for physical activity and relaxation, strengthened community ties, increased property values, investment appeal and reduced crime.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	●●●	 	This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can make changes on city-owned property.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Parks and Recreation, Community Development	
Key Partners		Local education institutions, local churches, YMCA, Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Known green spaces include Advocate Sherman Hospital's geothermal pond with walking paths and community garden, East Side Neighborhood Garden and the NENA Butterfly Garden.
- Judson University's architecture program includes curriculum on greenspace design.
- Elgin High School's environmental program organizes a "National Biodiversity Teach-in" event.
- Wild Ones provides education on a variety of gardens and native plants.
- Chicago's Urban Agriculture Ordinance allows vacant lots to be used for urban farming, enabling residents to grow food on previously unused land.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of vacant lots converted to green space

Action Items

- Create a map of vacant lots and green spaces. On the map, identify if the lot or space is on public or private land and areas impacted by heat islands.
- Explore programs that grow native and pollinator plants on city-owned vacant lots, as an alternative to traditional grass coverage.
- Explore programming and initiatives that convert vacant lots into green spaces and foster community involvement. Examples of programs and initiatives that convert vacant lots into green spaces include conversions to produce: rain gardens for stormwater management solutions, community gardens to provide access to fresh produce while addressing food insecurity and parks for recreation areas and neighborhood beautification.



Public Health & Safety

Vision: Elgin is a safe and socially connected community that cares for all community members, is prepared for future climate risks and is committed to improving the health and well-being of its most vulnerable populations.

One of the most critical steps in building climate resilience in Elgin is strengthening the community's public health and safety systems. As the city faces increasing risks from severe weather, flooding and extreme heat, it must prioritize creating a connected and compassionate community that supports all residents—especially those most vulnerable to climate impacts. Because these impacts are not felt equally, investing in the health and well-being of the most at-risk populations is essential to creating a safer, more resilient Elgin for everyone. True resilience will require both reinforcing physical systems—such as infrastructure, green spaces, buildings and food systems—and enhancing social systems, including public health services and emergency response.

Elgin is expected to experience
**30 additional
days of 95 degree
weather each year.**

Extreme heat can have strong negative effects on people's health.

Source: An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change In Illinois (2021)

**The top 1%
of storms are
projected to have
35% more rain**

by mid-century, which increases the risk of flooding around Elgin.

Source: An Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change In Illinois (2021)



Progress to Date

- Kane County and Elgin’s Emergency Management Department have launched communications efforts to educate residents about the risks of extreme hot and cold weather and how to be prepared for extreme weather scenarios.
- Many churches and community organizations around Elgin have community gardens that support access to healthy, local food and build community resilience.
- Tree Planting: Elgin plants hundreds of trees in parks and on City property each year and encourages residents to participate in tree planting through the Tree Bank Planting Program, which helps mitigate extreme heat and absorb stormwater.

Key Stakeholders

- Kane County Public Health and Emergency Management Departments
- Elgin’s Emergency Management, Community Development and Neighborhood Services Departments
- Local churches, community-based organizations and community centers

Action Summary Table

Action	Implementation Responsibility	Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits
Continue to implement “heat island” mitigation strategies, particularly in neighborhoods affected by heat islands and areas with high levels of impervious surface coverage.	★ +	\$\$	● ●	■ ●
Support neighborhood and community garden programs that expand access to healthy, locally grown food—particularly for individuals facing food insecurity—through targeted assistance and incentives.	★ +	\$	● ●	● ● ●
Develop and launch an emergency preparedness and response educational campaign.	★ +	\$	●	●
Incentivize climate resiliency standards for new construction and development.	★	\$	● ●	■ ●

Co-Benefits
 GHG Emissions Reduction
 Infrastructure Resilience
 Natural Resilience
 Social Resilience
 Equity & Empowerment

Continue to implement “heat island” mitigation strategies, particularly in neighborhoods affected by heat islands and areas with high levels of impervious surface coverage.

Examples of ‘heat-island’ mitigation include shade tree planting and improving vegetation cover, cool/green roofs, expanding greenspaces, etc.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$\$	● ●		This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin can include heat island mitigation strategies as part of street, park and other infrastructure projects and promote these strategies to private property owners.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Community Development, Engineering Department, Forestry, Parks and Recreation Department		
Key Partners	Wild Ones, Illinois University Extension, Elgin Sustainability Commission, local neighborhood associations and advocacy groups, local nurseries		
Potential Funding	City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- Elgin’s Engineering Department oversees stormwater basin retrofits that have focused on introducing naturalized bioswales and native plants, such as the Brookside Basin example.
- Elgin has an existing Tree Inventory and plants hundreds of trees each year. The City is also in the process of developing a tree management plan that should be complete by the end of the 2025 calendar year.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of “heat islands” mitigation strategies implemented.
- Number of trees planted each year in heat island areas
- Number of stormwater basin retrofits

Action Items

- Use existing data to identify heat islands in Elgin.
- Continue to explore opportunities to use pervious paving in appropriate areas.
- Continue to pursue programs, initiatives and policies that promote native plantings.
- Continue retrofitting stormwater basins to incorporate green infrastructure solutions.
- Prioritize tree planting in areas identified as heat islands, selecting appropriate trees species that will thrive over the long term.
- Pair implementation of heat island mitigation strategies with public education on the health and ecosystem benefits of these measures.
- Provide educational resources to encourage heat mitigation practices on private property.

Support neighborhood and community garden programs that expand access to healthy, locally grown food—particularly for individuals facing food insecurity—through targeted assistance and incentives.

Neighborhood and community gardens are collaborative spaces where people work together to grow plants, fruits and vegetables. Foods produced in community gardens can contribute to local food supplies and enhance food security and access to healthy foods.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	● ●	  	This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement		Elgin can support new uses of park space.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Parks and Recreation, Community Development, Sustainability Staff	
Key Partners		Local churches, Centro de Información, Neighborhood Associations, Food Pantries, University of Illinois Extension, East Side Community Garden, Sherman Natural Prairie and Community Garden	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- Sustainable Elgin Community Grant program has funded projects at the Eastside Neighborhood Community Garden and at the Sherman Natural Prairie Community Garden.
- The Elgin Adopt a Garden program organizes residents to maintain flowerbeds in Downtown Elgin.
- Various churches and community-based organizations around Elgin have community gardens.
- Several local community gardens have existing programs to donate produce to local food pantries.
- The Sherman Natural Prairie and Community Garden offers outreach and educational programming to empower Elgin residents to grow their own food and start a community garden.

Action Items

- Assess the demand for neighborhood and community gardens in Elgin.
- Identify suitable and feasible locations within Elgin public spaces for community garden development.
- Create a comprehensive map of existing neighborhood and community gardens, as well as available spaces for future projects.
- Explore successful community garden models and consider launching a program to support the growth of community gardens.
- Partner with educational programs to promote and support initiatives focused on community gardening.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of community gardens in Elgin
- Number of educational activities or events around community gardening and local produce

Develop and launch an emergency preparedness and response educational campaign.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	●	👤	This action is supported by community input.
Elgin's Authority to Implement		Elgin can establish educational campaigns and emergency response services.	
Implementing Department / Organization		Fire Department, Police Department, Office of Emergency Management, Sustainability Staff, Communications Staff, Public Works	
Key Partners		Kane County, TRIAD (senior services collaborative which involves Elgin Township, community seniors, law enforcement and support/protective services), Police Department's Citizen Police Academy, Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association, National Weather Service, NOAA	
Potential Funding		City, Grants	

What work has already been done?

- In 2024, the City updated the outdoor warning system (traditionally known as tornado sirens) to detect and provide earlier warnings of severe thunderstorms and tornados.
- Elgin participates in the National Weather Service Weather Support Program, which proactively identifies severe weather for large events, in case there is a need to evacuate attendees.
- The City purchased the Mobile Emergency Operations Unit that provides on-scene command and coordination for emergencies.
- Kane County updated their Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2024 and is working on emergency preparedness education across the county.
- Elgin's Emergency Management webpage offers resources on preparedness for a variety of extreme weather events.
- Elgin has Rave Smart911 alerts that provides community members with timely emergency notifications.

Action Items

- Collaborate with the Communications Department to develop a long-term outreach plan on emergency preparedness and response, including proactive education on warning signals (what they mean and how to respond).
- Leverage existing educational resources and partner with local agencies to help residents prepare for and respond to extreme weather events.
- Create educational content for social media and other communication channels promoting best practices during extreme weather—such as building emergency kits, checking on neighbors and signing up for Elgin's RAVE/Smart911 alerts.
- Seek grant funding or other opportunities to purchase and distribute NOAA weather radios to residents.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Number of participants in educational outreach or events.
- Number of emergency preparedness communications campaigns.
- Explore and pursue the development of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) to strengthen local preparedness and resilience.
- Evaluate opportunities to improve accessibility, comfort and energy efficiency at Elgin’s designated heating and cooling centers.

Incentivize climate resiliency standards for new construction and development.

Examples of climate resiliency standards include land use policies and regulations to minimize or prevent development in high-risk areas while incentivizing development in lower risk zones. At the building scale, backup strategies for extreme weather events, such as off-grid, decentralized energy supplies, are essential. Additionally, passive design elements—like northerly building orientations and the use of trees or shutters for shading—can help mitigate the effects of extreme heat.

Cost	Timeframe	Co-Benefits	Community Support
\$	● ●	 	This action is supported by community input.
Elgin’s Authority to Implement	Elgin can define and provide incentives for climate resiliency standards for construction through ordinances or other incentive programs.		
Implementing Department / Organization	Community Development, Public Works, Sustainability Department		
Key Partners	Water and Power Utilities, Sustainable DuPage - Choose DuPage - Smart Energy Design, neighboring municipalities, development partners like Randall Road Real Estate LLC, realtors, construction		
Potential Funding	Tax credits for energy efficient homes, utility incentive programs, City, Grants		

What work has already been done?

- Elgin has adopted the Kane County Stormwater Management Ordinance, which establishes comprehensive guidelines for stormwater management, focusing on flood prevention, water quality, and environmental protection.
- City of Wheaton has developed sustainable design guidelines.
- DuPage County Environmental Division and Choose DuPage partnered to create “Sustainable DuPage”, a program to support businesses in adopting sustainable practices.

Action Items

- Develop and promote educational materials on climate resilience standards for developers, the business community, commercial owners and local decision-makers, ensuring these standards are integrated into development discussions. An example of this would be continuing to discourage development in wetlands and floodplains.
- Provide tailored information and resources to support homeowners, landlords, building managers and other stakeholders in enhancing the climate resilience of existing buildings.

- SEDAC developed the Green Business Checklist, a tool to assist Chicagoland small to mid-sized businesses in adopting sustainable practices. It covers areas such as energy consumption, transportation and more, providing helpful tips to reduce environmental impact and improve efficiency.

Metrics/Tracking Progress

- Educational materials developed and promoted

- Promote and incentivize practices such as:
 - Water conservation: Installation of systems, equipment, technology and appliances, such as smart irrigation systems and water use-tracking equipment.
 - Energy efficiency and conservation: Installation of systems, equipment, technology and appliances that foster energy efficiency, such as insulation for improved heating and cooling to reduce energy consumption.
 - Flood-proofing measures: Advocate for effective flood-resistant strategies in development and building design.
- Partner with utility companies to promote incentive programs that strengthen community resilience—such as offering rebates for reducing risks from natural hazards, supporting demand response during peak or emergency events and encouraging the adoption of backup energy systems and storage technologies.
- Support climate resilience initiatives for Elgin businesses to encourage the adoption of sustainable and adaptive practices.

IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

Climate action will require a collective effort between the City, community members and regional partners to achieve the goals set out in the CAP and to implement the specific climate action recommendations. This section summarizes governance recommendations, ongoing community and stakeholder engagement, progress tracking through clear metrics and an implementation framework to guide Elgin in turning the CAP into meaningful action.

Governance Recommendations

- **Public officials should continue to prioritize climate action and resiliency in strategic planning efforts:** City Council should continue to commit to making climate action a city priority as a means to improve the community and evaluate progress on initiatives to ensure accountability.
- **Integrate climate resilience into city planning:** Continue to ensure that climate impacts and resilience factors are incorporated into the city's planning processes, including area development plans, development reviews and capital improvement projects.
- **Assign staff responsibilities for tracking CAP progress:** Designate dedicated staff to annually monitor blueprint metrics.
- **Present annual CAP progress:** Establish an annual presentation to update the city staff and the City Council on CAP progress. Publish the annual update publicly to keep the Elgin community informed of developments.
- **Strengthen partnerships with government agencies and local organizations:** Foster collaborative relationships with local agencies, schools and community-based organizations, to amplify collective climate action efforts.
- **Regularly update the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory:** Update the GHG Inventory every 5 years to get an up-to-date emissions profile from activity specific Elgin, to help inform decision making related to reduction strategies and to monitor progress and evaluate efforts.



Partnerships & Engagement

Implementing climate actions will involve collaboration and coordination of efforts from the City, Elgin community and regional partners.



Emissions from City Operations are 3% of Community emissions

Strengthening Partnerships

- Build on partnerships/relationships established through the CAP engagement process.
- Identify opportunities to work with regional partners and agencies to disseminate messages and educational campaigns.
- Partner with City management staff and work to understand department needs in implementing tactics that involve city processes, procedures and/or policies.
- Connect efforts with and learn from neighboring municipalities that have pursued similar initiatives, policies, programming, etc.

Continuing Engagement

Community engagement has been a central focus throughout the development of the CAP. Maintaining that strong connection is equally important for successful implementation. The City will continue to engage, inform, share progress and collaborate with the community on climate action efforts.

Key groups for continued engagement

- Community organizations and institutions
- Elgin community/general public
- Elgin's Hispanic community
- Youth and educational institutions
- City department heads and staff
- Regional government partners

Principles for ongoing engagement and outreach

- **Provide language access:** Develop educational materials in multiple languages to make sure information is accessible to diverse populations.
- **Create targeted and educational messaging:** Use messaging that resonates with communities, like emphasizing native plants and pollinator habitat when promoting green infrastructure projects.
- **Foster early and inclusive involvement:** Bring community stakeholders in at the beginning of implementation projects to co-develop solutions, build partnerships and foster community decision-making power.
- **Leverage partnerships:** Use established communication channels and work through trusted partners to expand participation in educational programs and campaigns.
- **Involve youth:** Engage young people across the community in outreach and educational programming to foster long-term community engagement.

Program Metrics and Progress Tracking

Tracking progress made towards the climate actions in the CAP is a critical part of implementation and being able to communicate Elgin's continued work towards the CAP's goals.

Overarching Metrics

Elgin will monitor overarching metrics that will give a high level view of climate action across the city. Examples of key metrics include:

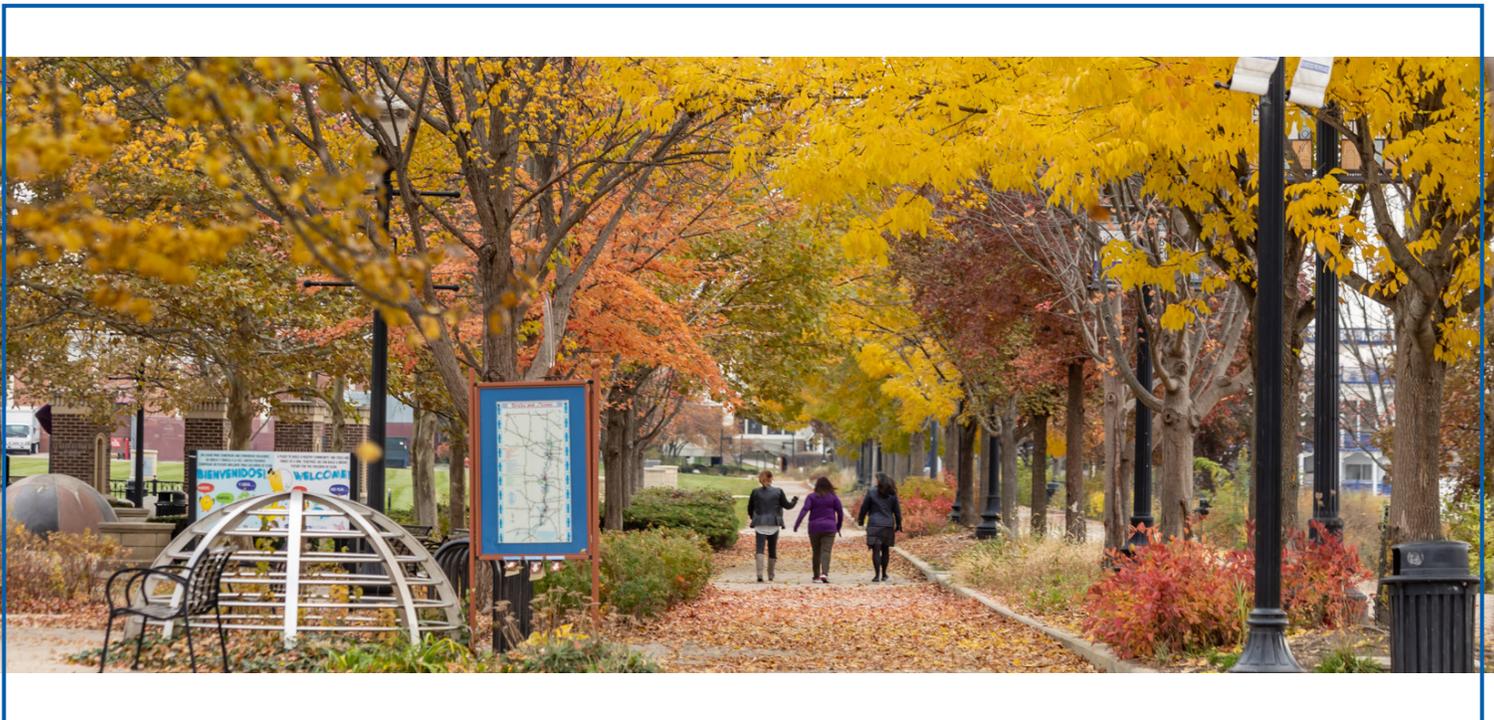
- Community GHG Emissions
- Municipal GHG Emissions
- Number of engagement partnerships and diversity of organizations/partnerships
- Demographics of engagement event participants
- Tree canopy coverage and sequestration impact of Elgin's trees and forests (based on GHG inventory)
- Percentage of community waste collection that is recycling, yard waste, or household organics

Tracking Progress on Specific Climate Actions

Each climate action is tied to individualized metrics, which will help track progress and measure impact as shown in the Implementation Blueprints and Summary of Climate Action Tracking Metrics in the previous section.

A Progress Tracking Dashboard will be developed to show the implementation status of all climate actions.

Annual CAP Progress Update: City staff will provide an annual update on CAP progress to City Council each year and publish the update online.



Implementation Strategy

Climate actions will occur on varying timelines and require different levels of effort. Elgin will prioritize different types of actions over the years—beginning with education and outreach and progressing toward larger capital projects and infrastructure improvements. Strengthening partnerships and consistently tracking progress will be essential throughout the implementation process.

Timeframe	Actions
 <p>1-2 years</p>	<p>Theme: Grow partnerships for educational campaigns and community-focused programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach and Education efforts: energy efficiency and renewable energy, EV adoption, water conservation, emergency preparedness and response, buying local • Programs: pollinator gardens, flood mitigation efforts, tree planting • Tracking: Establish Progress Tracking Dashboard and begin tracking metrics for initial actions.
 <p>3-5 years</p>	<p>Theme: Pursue policy-based changes to promote and incentivize resilient development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Incentives: Low Impact Development & Green Infrastructure, heat island mitigation, climate resilience and net-zero standards for new construction, residential building efficiency • Programs: municipal aggregation, expansion of household organics collection, TDM, food waste recovery • Tracking: Continue tracking overarching and action-specific metrics.
 <p>5+ years</p>	<p>Theme: Pursue municipal electrification, decarbonization and infrastructure improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal building and fleet electrification efforts, grid decarbonization • Bus shelter improvements and greenspace expansion • Make updates to implementation metrics and Progress Tracking Dashboard as needed to reflect progress and community priorities.

GLOSSARY

Biodiversity: Biodiversity describes the diversity of living organisms in a given area: from microorganisms (bacteria) to large organisms (trees, bears, etc.) and everything in between that supports the health of an ecosystem. The more biodiverse an area, the healthier it is.

BIPOC: an acronym that means Black, Indigenous, & People of Color

Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e): Carbon dioxide equivalent is a way of measuring greenhouse gas emissions, based on their global warming potential (GWP). This measurement puts all GHG emissions in relation to the GWP of carbon dioxide, which is considered to have a GWP of 1.

Circular Economy: A circular economy entails keeping goods and materials in use for as long as possible. This is a more intentional version of recycling and aims to reduce waste. When waste is created, it becomes useful to adapt into other goods and materials.

Climate adaptation: The adjustments communities or ecosystems make to respond to and minimize the negative effects of climate change, or to take advantage of opportunities provided. Adaptation actions include having or updating emergency plans, ensuring buildings are more flood resistant and planting trees to absorb excess heat during the summer.

Climate change: Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (<https://www.ipcc.ch/>).

Climate justice: Climate justice recognizes that climate change and social, racial and environmental issues are deeply interconnected and seeks to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change borne by BIPOC and low-income communities.

Climate mitigation: Climate mitigation means reducing emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere to prevent the planet from warming to more extreme temperatures.

Conservation: Conservation entails conscientiously using natural resources to avoid harming the environment, ensuring it can remain healthy and intact for generations to come.

Emission Neutrality: Emission neutrality refers to reducing all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero (emissions emitted are equal to emissions removed) by implementing climate solutions.

Environmental justice: Environmental justice entails ensuring equitable treatment and active participation of all individuals, irrespective of race, color, national origin, or income, in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Equity: Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential. Unlike equality, which connotes sameness, equity is responsive to difference. Equitable policies actively mitigate the disproportionate harm faced by certain communities.

Greenhouse gas (GHG): Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, causing the greenhouse effect. While some are naturally occurring (like the absorption and release of carbon dioxide in trees and vegetation), others are released through human activity, including burning fossil fuels.

GHG reduction measure: A GHG reduction measure is an action that reduces GHG emissions or enhances carbon removal, meaning that carbon is removed from the atmosphere and stored (or “sequestered”) in vegetation or soils.

Hazard: A hazard is an event or condition caused by changes in the climate that may result in loss of life, injury, negative health impacts, or damage to property, infrastructure, services, or environmental resources.

Justice 40 Initiative: The Justice 40 initiative is a goal of the Federal Government to ensure that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved and overburdened by pollution.

Justice 40 Community: The Justice40 Initiative defines a disadvantaged community as a census tract that meets certain thresholds for environmental, climate, or other burdens, as well as associated socio-economic burdens. The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), is used to identify if a census tract is disadvantaged. Generally, CEJST considers the following eight categories of burden to determine whether a census tract meets the threshold of being defined as disadvantaged: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater and workforce development. [Explore the map: Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](https://www.geoplatform.gov/cejst)

Native Plants: Plants that naturally grow in the region, without having been introduced by humans. It can take anywhere from about 1-5 years for newly planted natives to successfully grow in an area. Once established, native plants are often easier to grow and support the ecosystem as they have coevolved in the region for thousands of years.

Nature-based solutions: Nature-based solutions encompass a variety of sustainable planning, design, environmental management and engineering practices that integrate natural features or processes into the built environment to address challenges such as climate change, flood risk, habitat loss, erosion, urban heat and water quality.

Net-Zero Emissions: Net zero emissions is a state where the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted by humans into the atmosphere is equal to the amount removed. This includes carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide.

Preservation: Preservation means protecting natural areas, like forests, from development or any high impact human use.

Regeneration: Regeneration means restoring functions to natural systems and reviving natural processes.

Regenerative Agriculture: Regenerative agriculture refers to farming and grazing techniques that focus on restoring biodiversity in the soil, increasing its capacity for carbon sequestration among other benefits.

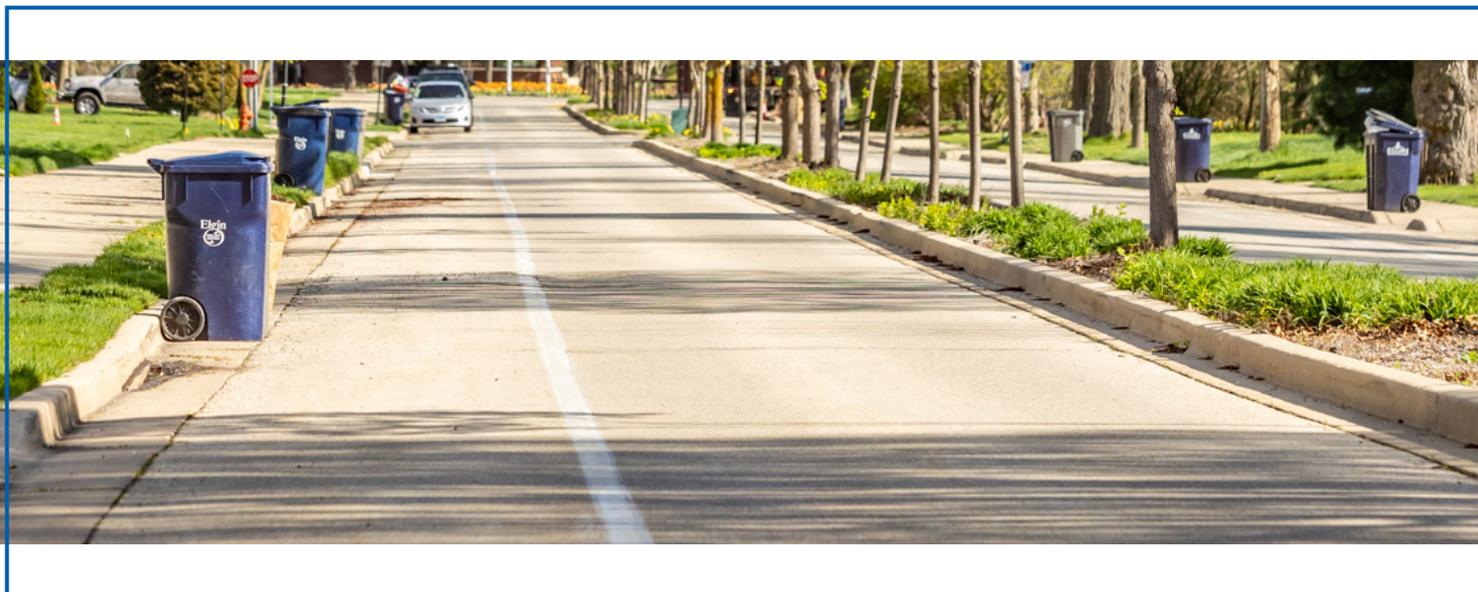
Resilience: Resilience is the ability of social, economic and environmental systems to manage a hazardous event, trend, or disturbance. It involves responding or reorganizing in a manner that preserves the systems' essential function, identity and structure, while concurrently retaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation. Resilience is often described as surviving, thriving and "bouncing forward."

Sequestration: Sequestration means absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in biomass, including trees and plants, soils and living organisms. Sequestration is another term for carbon removal.

Urban heat island: An urban heat island is characterized by significantly higher temperatures in a concentrated location, typically within a city compared to near-by rural areas. The temperature contrast between urban and less-developed rural regions is influenced by the varying capacities of surfaces in each environment to absorb and retain heat. Buildings and infrastructure absorb and re-emit heat more than natural features such as trees and water bodies. (US EPA)

Vulnerability: Vulnerability is how likely a person, community, or system is to be negatively affected by something, like climate change. It depends on their exposure to the risk, sensitivity to harm and how well they can cope and adapt. Climate vulnerability is how much a community or system is at risk from the effects of climate change and how hard it is for them to handle these changes.

Vulnerable Populations: Groups of individuals with high sensitivity to and low adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change. Often includes the economically disadvantaged, elderly, youth, minorities and the socially isolated.






ELGIN
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