

## CHAPTER SEVEN: SUSTAINABILITY

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The term “sustainability” has become widely used in recent years, with a broad range of potential definitions and interpretations. For Brookfield, sustainability is focused not only on protecting natural resources, but also on ensuring a high quality of life for all residents while considering the impact local actions have on the greater region and world. In short, sustainability in Brookfield will involve continued and expanded efforts to preserve our quality of life and meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same, and to maintain City service levels while maintaining reasonable municipal costs.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the City’s approach to sustainability, including a Brookfield-specific definition of sustainability and potential future strategies. These strategies encompass the topics covered in several other chapters of this Plan; there is therefore some amount of repetition.

Sustainability is relevant and important to Brookfield because it is

- A way of organizing and understanding an approach and many actions that the City has already embraced which lead to sustainability.
- Fiscally and economically sound, through such actions as increasing energy-efficiency in a time of volatile fuel prices and diversifying business mix in a time of economic restructuring.
- Responsible towards the long-term health of our natural environment that in turn sustains our ability to live and prosper.
- Responsive to this period of dynamic change and major challenges in our region, nation, and world.
- Being adopted, incentivized, and in some cases mandated by our state and federal government.
- A goal that has permeated our professions, business practices, lifestyles, and culture and created a certain level of acceptance and expectation.

### *Sustainability Principle (Goal)*

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Brookfield is a sustainable community in all aspects—from the environment to the economy—and leads in responsible community growth and redevelopment

### *Sustainability Objectives*

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1. Embark on a concerted program of community sustainability, working to ingrain it in all City decision making and educate the Brookfield community on how they can participate and why.
2. Emphasize sustainable approaches that have multiple community benefits (e.g., increased energy-efficiency in City buildings and vehicles can save taxpayer money and protect the environment).

### *Sustainability Policies, Programs, and Recommendations*

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Figure 9: Sustainability in Brookfield includes the City’s definition, goals with each of the following categorical areas, as well as example strategies for each category. Building on the examples in the graphic, the City may pursue the following initiatives in support of its vision for sustainability:

#### **Economy**

1. Continue to support a diverse range of office, commercial, and light industrial uses that help stabilize the tax base and provide family-supporting jobs.

2. Through supporting hospitality and regional retail businesses, retain local resident spending and bring in dollars from outside the community.
3. Continue to promote Brookfield as a sustainable business location at the southeastern Wisconsin region's economic and population center point.
4. Support the creation and growth of smaller, locally-owned businesses.
5. Encourage businesses to participate in Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation's Partnerships for Sustainability to learn about steps that help improve top-line revenue and bottom-line efficiencies through sustainable business practices.

## Environment

1. Continue implementation of the City's Wetland Acquisition Program. The City has acquired numerous acres of wetlands for perpetual protection since the program's inception.
2. Continue to practice and require progressive stormwater management and infiltration, where soil type permits.
3. Continue the comprehensive community recycling program, and consider waste reduction and possible waste to energy conversion initiatives.
4. Promote the installation of native vegetation and trees and the removal of invasive, non-native vegetation. Consider an Earth Day community "clean-up" event for such vegetation.
5. Lead by example on other environmental sustainability projects. Continue the current "least use" and "least risk" policy for fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide use on City-owned land and explore other potential initiatives such as a demonstration rain garden or native landscaping plot at the Civic Center.



*Rain garden in the Village of DeForest, WI*

## Education

1. Encourage continued modernization of public education, through efforts like expansion of science- and technology-based curriculum and internship programs with local businesses.
2. Support expansion of adult education opportunities, such as through additional entrepreneurial training and higher education opportunities.

## Development

1. Continue to support mixed use redevelopment in Targeted Investment Areas (TIAs) which promotes 24-7 activity, increases safety (from more "eyes on the street"), and reduces vehicle miles traveled, to name just a few benefits. Proactively identify TIAs that may be stagnating or slipping, and consider City involvement and actions within them to help resolve issues before they become larger problems.

2. Promote energy efficient building and site design through development approvals and possibly through incentives.
3. Incorporate natural means of stormwater management and water conservation in new development projects.
4. Advance the Northwest Gateway TIA development and Village Area TIA redevelopment as model sustainable developments.
5. Integrate historic preservation early and seriously in development decision making, per recommendations in the Special Places chapter.

### **Neighborhoods**

1. Maintain patrols and other efforts to keep neighborhoods safe.
2. Keep public facilities (e.g., parks and streets) in neighborhoods well-maintained and up to date.
3. Allow for new “lifecycle” and market-rate workforce housing in TIAs, and mostly single family housing on remaining vacant tracts elsewhere.
4. Proactively identify neighborhoods that may be stagnating or slipping, and consider City involvement and actions within them to help resolve issues before they become larger problems.

### **Transportation**

1. Maintain and improve regional and local access while managing traffic congestion to meet multiple goals, including maintaining a strong business environment. This will require balancing sometimes conflicting objectives.
2. Consider interim improvements to preserve and enhance corridor level of service and safety, such as intersection improvements, prior to road widenings.
3. Continue assertive development of the greenways trail network.
4. Consider adding Travel Demand Management (TDM) plans to the Traffic Impact Analyses already required for larger developments, setting a consistent set of requirements for both.
5. Encourage businesses to consider options that reduce peak-hour single occupant motor vehicle trips including telecommuting, staggered work times, and incentives to use alternative modes to reduce peak volumes or other TDM measures.
6. Introduce more efficient and environmentally-responsible designs into new street projects, such as roundabouts, “eco-boulevards” (native vegetation and infiltration), and improved access control.
7. Make on- and off-street bicycle connections within the City, and collaborate on connections between Brookfield and nearby destinations such as the Milwaukee County Research Park, the New Berlin Industrial Park, and Kohl’s corporate headquarters.

### **Government**

1. Focus efforts on maintaining a reasonable property tax rate now and in the future.
2. Administer sustainability training to City officials and staff; and consider inviting the School District of Elmbrook and community service representatives to such training.
3. Establish a process for filtering City budgeting and other decision making through a sustainability lens, and integrate sustainability into the City’s next strategic plan and thereafter.

4. Continue to build and remodel City facilities to prioritize energy efficiency, and consider designing the next new City facility or major addition to be LEED-certifiable or meet some other sustainability standard.
5. Explore approaches to expand recycling, reduce waste production, and/or convert waste to energy.

### Lifestyle

1. Maintain an array of park and recreation programs for community health, interaction, and fulfillment.
2. Partner with area health care institutions on an initiative to advance personal health in the community.
3. Partner with Farmers' Market organizers to expand the market (in size or by extending the season indoors), or otherwise expand local food availability and awareness.
4. Support urban agriculture in Brookfield, including backyard gardens, window boxes, and schoolyard greenhouses.
5. Communicate with residents and businesses on the City's sustainability initiative and to increase awareness of ecological living options.



*The Brookfield Farmers' Market provides an excellent source of nutritious local food*

## “EDGE CITY” EXAMPLES

### How have other Edge Cities developed and implemented sustainable community initiatives?

**Bloomington, MN**, (population 82,521) historically a leader in environmental consciousness, energy efficiency, and sustainability, has recently initiated a number of projects that support the City’s *Sustainable Bloomfield* initiative, including:

- Submission of four project plans to Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)—a grant program that funds strategies to reduce fossil fuel emissions and total energy use, and improve overall energy efficiency.
- Completion of an Alternative Transportation Plan to develop a comprehensive and multi-modal transportation system for inter- and intra-city travel.
- Support LEED certification of new office and mixed-use buildings in the City.
- Construction of a regional stormwater infiltration project at a local park that consists of a permeable asphalt parking lot and two rain gardens.

**Eden Prairie, MN** (population 61,262) is working to improve energy efficiency through its *20-40-15* initiative, which calls for 20 percent improvement in energy efficiency in all municipal facilities and a 40 percent improvement in fuel efficiency in the municipal vehicle fleet—both to be accomplished by the year 2015. To date Phases I and II have been completed. In the spring of 2009, the federal government allocated \$627,000 of grant funding to Eden Prairie through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to develop and implement projects to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy use and fossil fuel emissions. In order to receive this funding, the City applied for an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. The City earmarked this funding for 20-40-15 Phase III projects, which will include: (1) ventilation system improvements, (2) “Open Protocol” energy management system, (3) dehumidifier replacement, (4) and installation of LED parking lot and building lighting at various buildings.

**Minnetonka, MN** (population 51,057) was recently ranked #8 in energy savings in the *Minnesota Energy Challenge*. Participation in this program has prevented nearly 1.4 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the environment.

**Schaumburg, IL** (population 74,271) adopted a *Comprehensive Green Action Plan*, which addresses the 12 action items designated by the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Schaumburg has also been designated a “Cool City” by the Sierra Club—a designation given to cities that have taken concerted steps toward increasing municipal energy efficiency and investing in renewable energy.

**Golden, CO** (population 17,701) as part of the City’s *Golden Sustainability* initiative, has established seven working groups to research sustainability issues and make recommendations to the City Council. Working groups include building, economic health, education and communications, energy, solid waste reduction and recycling, transportation, and water.

## Figure 9: Sustainability in Brookfield

Click to view: [Figure 9: Sustainability in Brookfield](#)