

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chris Duerksen, Clarion Associates
Roger Millar, Smart Growth America

FROM: Hildy L. Kingma, AICP
Director of Economic Development and Planning

DATE: November 12, 2013

CC: John A. Ostenburg, Mayor
Thomas K. Mick, Village Manager

RE: EPA Technical Assistance for Sustainable Communities
Village of Park Forest, IL Sustainable Code Workshop
Six Month Progress Report

Smart Growth America conducted a Technical Assistance Workshop for the Village of Park Forest on April 18-19, 2013, for the purpose of providing recommendations for revising the zoning and subdivision ordinances in a manner that better promotes sustainable development and living. The key issues addressed during the workshop included the following:

- Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy
- Stormwater Management and Water Conservation
- Open Space and Green Infrastructure

The recommendations provided by Smart Growth America for revising the Village's zoning and subdivision ordinances include the following Short Term Priority Amendments and Longer-Term Priority Amendments.

Energy Conservation/Renewable Energy Goals

Short-Term Priorities

- Alternative energy systems
 - Create standards for solar and geothermal energy collection systems.
 - Allow solar energy systems as primary uses in some zoning districts.
 - Add clothes lines to the list of allowed accessory uses.
- Nonconforming use/building regulations – allow green renovations of non-conforming uses and structures without having to make a use or structure fully conforming.
- Bicycle parking regulations – create an incentive for bicycle parking by allowing a reduction in required off-street parking spaces if a commercial or multifamily development provides bicycle racks or lockers.
- Energy efficient outdoor lighting standards – adopt a comprehensive new approach to energy-saving outdoor lighting that addresses the type of light fixtures permitted, when outdoor lighting and signage must be turned-off or reduced, and putting security lights on motion-detectors.

- Priority parking for alternative fuel vehicles – provide priority parking spaces for alternative fuel vehicles and require electric vehicle recharging stations in all large parking lots.

Longer-Term Priorities

- Small and large-scale wind collection systems – determine whether WECS might be allowed in certain locations in the Village.
- Solar access/orientation
 - Address the issue of maintaining solar access for solar installations.
 - Explore requirements for solar orientation of new buildings on larger development sites.
- Mixed use/transit oriented developments – create mixed use or transit oriented development zoning districts that include use restrictions and dimensional standards (setbacks, lot coverage, floor area ratios, heights, etc) to allow for more urban, multi-use development.
- Live-work units – in commercial, office and industrial areas allow for the construction of structures that include incidental residential units attached to businesses.
- Cool roofs – create incentives for or require buildings to be covered with cool roofs (white roofs with high reflectivity).

Stormwater Management and Water Conservation Goals

Short Term Priorities

- Off street parking requirements
 - Revise off-street parking regulations to reduce the ratios of parking spaces to square feet of development.
 - Allow adjacent on-street parking on the same side of the street to be counted against off-street requirements.
 - Consider maximum parking limits.
 - Consider permitting an automatic reduction in required off-street parking when development is within walking distance of a bus or Metra stop.
- Parking lot landscaping
 - Create standards for perimeter and interior parking lot landscaping.
 - Consider allowing or requiring some parking lot landscaping to be depressed below grade so it can provide for stormwater retention.

Longer-Term Priorities

- Pervious pavement and green roofs – create standards for the use of green roofs and permeable pavement, and other green infrastructure techniques, as part of a development site's stormwater management plan.
- Green infrastructure street standards - create subdivision, street, and parking lot pavement and landscaping standards that will allow and promote the use of green infrastructure (i.e., stormwater infiltration inlets for landscaping, street-side bioswales, etc).

Open Space and Green Infrastructure Goals

Short Term Priorities

- Open space set-aside requirements – for infill and mixed-use compact developments, consider replacing the park land dedication requirements with “urban” open space amenity standards.
- Tree protection – require protection and/or replacement of existing trees on private property when new development occurs.

The Village is the recipient of local technical assistance from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which is providing staff to the Village to undertake revisions to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. CMAP previously assisted the Village with development of a Sustainability Plan. The Plan includes an audit of the zoning and subdivision regulations, and recommends comprehensive revisions to incorporate sustainability-related best practices and principles. The Smart Growth America report and recommendations, as well as the Sustainability Plan code audit, will be important resources for the development regulations revision process. In addition, CMAP’s work for the Village will involve a significant amount of public input, as recommended by the Smart Growth America report. The Scope of Work includes the creation of a Steering Committee made up of Village Staff, the Village’s Plan Commission, as well as local businesses and developers, to ensure that the development regulations are up-to-date and consistent with the comprehensive plan, but also to ensure that they do not place an inappropriate burden on the development and business community. The project is expected to be completed within a 16 month time frame.

In the past six months, the following steps have been taken to revise the Village’s development ordinances, and incorporate the recommendations of the Smart Growth America report and recommendations:

- June 17, 2013 – the Village of Park Forest Board of Trustees approved a Memorandum of Understanding and Scope of Work with CMAP that will initiate this work.
- July 16, 2013 – the Development Regulations Update Steering Committee met to review the project and their role in it.
- August 2013 – CMAP conducted 19 stakeholder interviews with Village Staff, various Village volunteer Commission members, business and property owners, and representatives of the Village’s multifamily properties (cooperatives, rentals, and condominiums).
- October 29, 2013 – CMAP conducted a public workshop, with 50 attendees, to obtain input on some of the major issues that will be addressed in the development regulations update. Sustainability issues covered include backyard bees and chickens, renewable energy, solar access, home occupations, accessory dwelling units, and native landscaping.
- Currently, CMAP has made available an online visual preference survey that gives the Park Forest community the opportunity to give feedback about the zoning and subdivision update. By visiting <http://parkforest.metroquest.com>, stakeholders can provide feedback about preferred development in the DownTown area, along Sauk Trail, and in large redevelopment site areas. Additionally, the survey gathers input on stakeholders’ ideas about sustainable development options.