

Creating a Livable Evanston

A set of recommendations developed

by

Evanston Environment Board

and

Climate Action and Resilience (CARP) Implementation Taskforce

Summary of recommendations

- Foundational framework of CGP should be CARP
- The Environment chapter should in more detail address broad and numerous aspects of climate impacts
- Sustainability, mitigation, resilience, and environmental equity should be woven into all other chapters
- Climate and sustainability goals should be quantifiable, trackable, and enforceable.

Climate Predictions for Illinois

- Avg. temperatures have risen 1.5°F; expected 7 - 12°F by the end of the century.
- Lake Michigan levels more extreme which may increase lakeshore erosion

Lake-Wide Water Levels for Lake Michigan-Huron

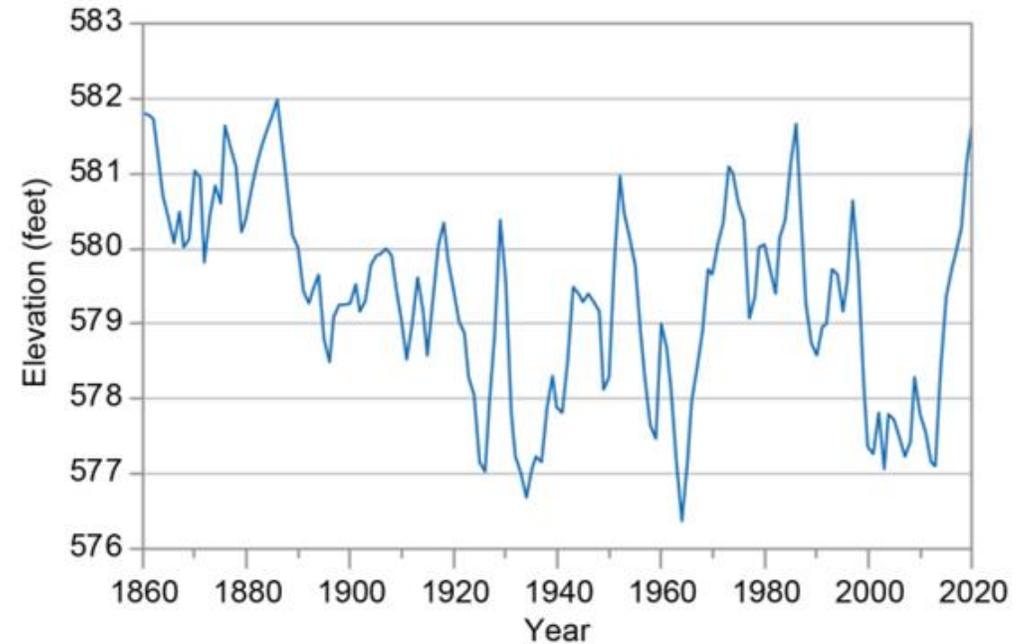


Figure 6: Annual time series of the average water levels for Lake Michigan–Huron from 1860 to 2020. Water levels in the Great Lakes have fluctuated widely over the years. Lake Michigan–Huron levels were very low during 2000–2013 but have since risen rapidly to the highest levels since 1886. Source: NOAA GLERL.

Climate Predictions for Illinois

- dramatic increase in extreme precipitation events may lead into severe flooding events

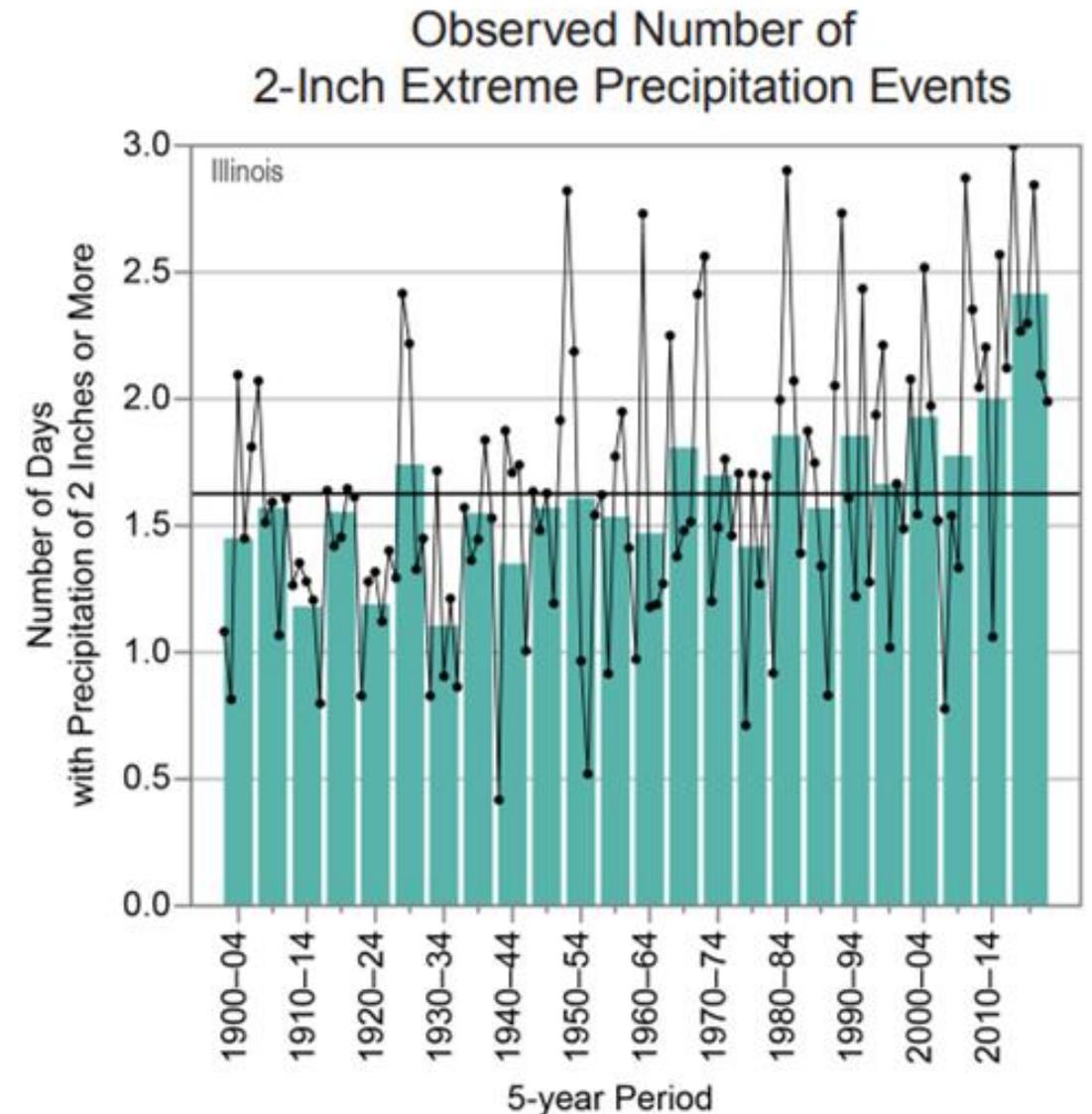


Figure 5: Observed annual number of 2-inch extreme precipitation events (days with precipitation of 2 inches or more) for Illinois from 1900 to 2020. Dots show annual values. Bars show averages over

CARP (Climate Action and Resilience Plan, 2018)

- Mitigation and Sustainability
 - carbon neutrality by 2050
 - 100 % renewable energy for all Evanston properties by 2030
 - zero waste by 2050
 - preserve, restore, and expand urban canopy
 - similar goals for municipal operations
- Resilience and Environmental (Climate) Justice
 - Prepare and protect the whole community, including our most vulnerable
 - Boost green infrastructure, stormwater management, community networks, and education
 - Emergency preparedness



**Climate Action and
Resilience Plan**

Incorporate Commitments Beyond CARP

Existing:

- Environmental Justice Resolution (2020)
- Climate Emergency Resolution (2022)
- EPLAN (2022) Local Assessment of Needs addressing health equity including its relation to climate change
- Climate Emergency Resolution (2022)
- Stormwater Master Plan (2023)

In Progress:

- Healthy Buildings Ordinance
- Parks and Green Space Strategic Plan
- Natural Areas Ordinance
- Municipal Zero Emissions Strategy
- Circularity Roadmap
- Environmental Equity Investigation
- Evanston Housing4All (City's strategic housing plan)

Our Recommendations

1. Livable Evanston: Promote a planning for Evanston that is human-scale and pedestrian-friendly, including the downtown business district.

- The CGP should lead to tree planting requirements for new projects and mandates for the amount of open space in a city, leaving room for trees to grow and designation of protected or sensitive areas such as the lakefront, sensitive habitats and the channel with riparian buffer strips or steep slopes.

**Shaded Sidewalk,
Central Street Evanston**



Our Recommendations

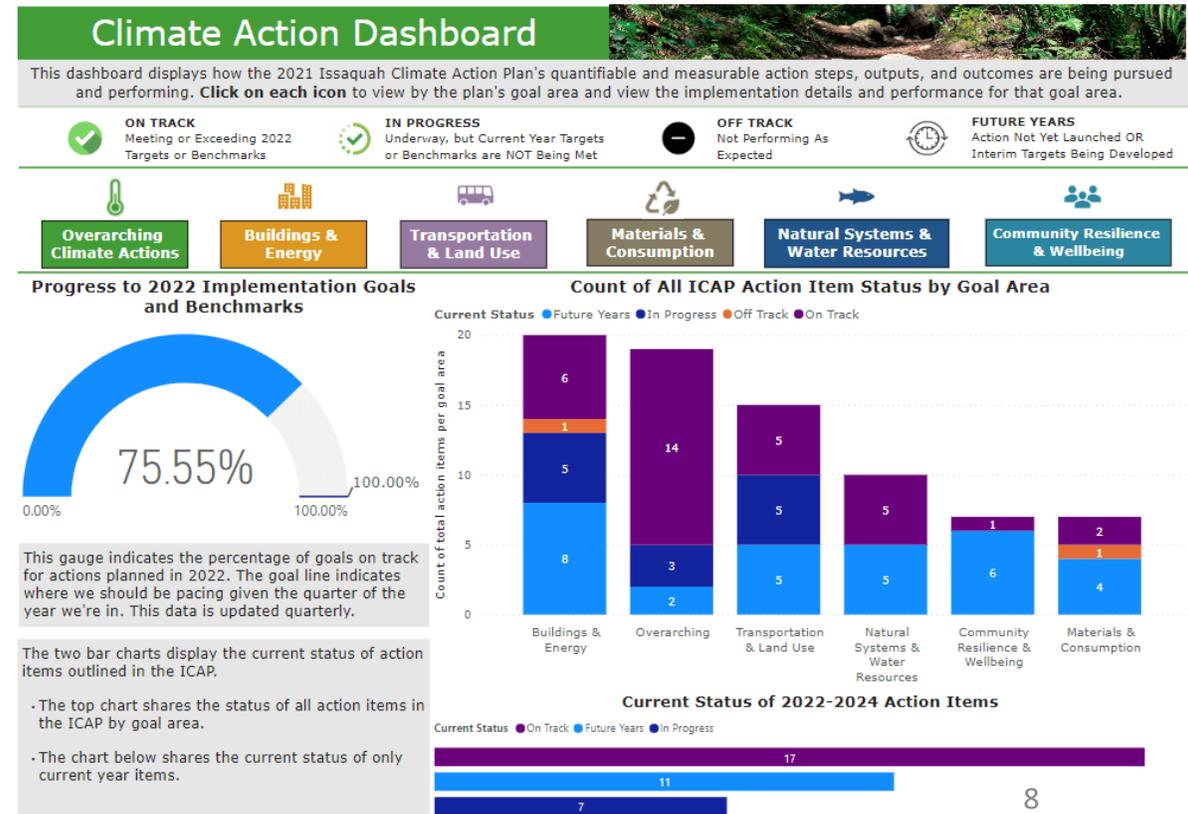
2. Climate Change Response with Measurable Goals:

1. Enhance and integrate measurable goals for sustainability, climate mitigation and resilience and environmental equity in each of the CGP's chapters.

2. Include clear, measurable goals so that community members, City staff and elected officials share a common platform for tracking the status of programs and actions intended to achieve them.

- Dashboard examples: A2ZERO, Ann Arbor MI carbon neutrality dashboard and Climate Action Dashboard, Issaquah WA

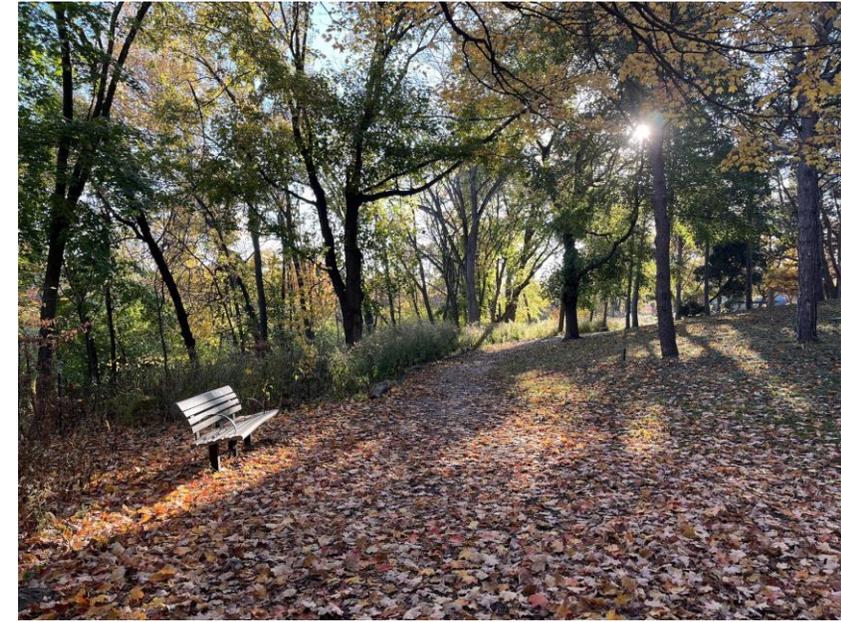
Example of a Climate Action Dashboard, City of Issaquah, WA



Our Recommendations

3. Multiple Benefits of Urban Green Spaces

1. Recognize the comprehensive value of our urban forest, greenspace, and natural habitat as a critical feature of urban infrastructure to create the livable community of the future, part of “nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and resilience - to help clean the air, reduce energy needs, raise property values, mitigate heat island effects, and absorb and divert rainfall - not just “landscaping”.
2. Go beyond protection and maintenance to enhance and increase green space, natural areas and trees in land use planning to support climate resilience, biodiversity, stormwater management and mental health.



Evanston urban forest with a bench



Our Recommendations

4. Equity:

1. Identify and mitigate current environmental inequities, and examine any potential adverse consequences of new development on vulnerable populations, referencing the ongoing Environmental Equity Investigation.
2. Ensure that residents have a meaningful opportunity to engage in decision-making that affects their quality of life, especially vulnerable and underrepresented populations.

Enact specific ordinances, policies and practices to avoid displacement of low to middle income residents, especially homeowners in areas previously impacted by red-lining, including recommendations of the City's future strategic housing plan (Evanston Housing4All)

Side-by-side maps of Evanston:

LEFT map of urban tree canopy; RIGHT satellite image of surface temperatures on a summer day.

The hottest areas of the city correlate to the lowest urban tree coverage and are located in the historically redlined areas of Evanston.

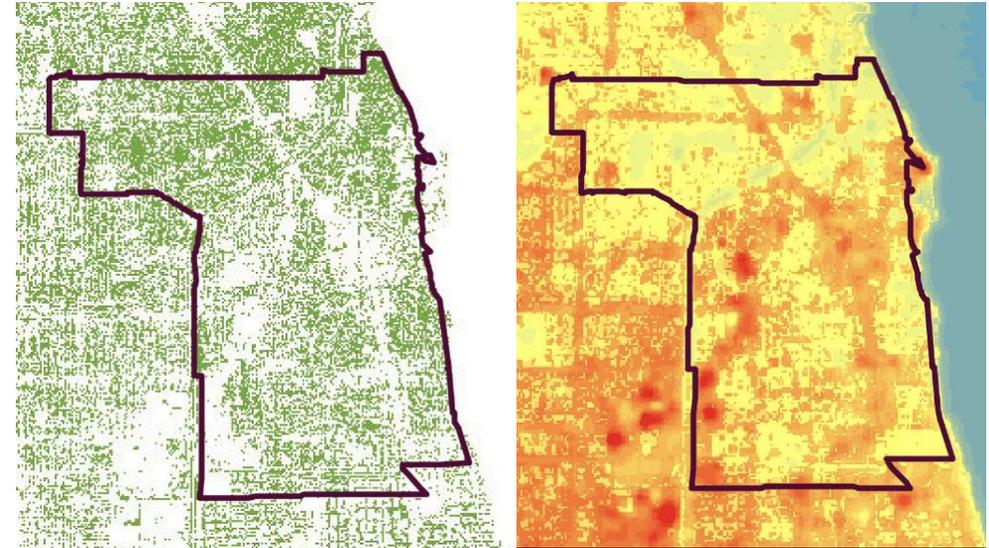


Photo source: [Evanston Urban Forestry Summary](#) 2017, Chicago Region Tree Initiative

Our Recommendations

5. Transportation

1. Ensure convenient and reliable public transit to all municipal buildings.
2. Plan for an even distribution of essential services throughout the entire city to promote walkability. Daily needs must be proximal to all residents, which mandates a greater use Mixed Use zones throughout our neighborhoods.



C&W Market is a great example of an essential service in an otherwise residential area.

Photo source: [Evanston Round Table](#) 2022

Our Recommendations

- 6. Future forward Energy Goals:** Develop and enforce specific renewable energy and energy efficiency standards for new development and facilitate improvements for all buildings, including affordable housing.
- 7. Public Health:** Support continued monitoring of public health and quality of life measures against the 2022 EPLAN baseline, particularly among vulnerable populations that contribute to the 13-year disparity in life expectancy across Evanston.
- 8. Additional Focus:** add content that addresses **Nature-based solutions, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Circular Economy, and Environmental Equity** each with clear and measurable goals.

Waste Shed, local program for repurposing crafting and school materials, an example of circular economy



Conclusions

- We understand that incorporating these recommendations represents significant changes to the current Comprehensive General Plan
- Envisioning the Evanston of 2045: we will be living in a very different climate, economy and community.
- Addressing current environmental issues and including climate change predictions in our plans for the future should not be regarded as a matter of choice
- If we do not do it in the present, later will be too costly both for our city and the health and wellbeing of our community.



Photo source: [Street Design Manual Oslo 2020](#)

Agency for Urban Environment