



2022

COOK COUNTY

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT





Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability

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Dear Cook County Resident,

I am pleased to present Cook County's 2022 Sustainability Report, which outlines the County's efforts to support healthy and resilient communities that thrive economically, socially and environmentally. At its core, sustainability is an environmental justice issue. Residents who live in low-income communities bear the brunt of pollution from fossil fuels.



In 2022, Cook County responded to these challenges by allocating over \$100 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to spearhead a variety of sustainability-related programs including lead service line replacements, energy efficiency assessments and retrofits, equal access to publicly available electric vehicle charging stations, green stormwater infrastructure and climate resiliency planning for communities and brownfield remediation expansion efforts. The County is also working to reduce pollution output from businesses such as dry cleaners, auto body and repair shops, metal finishers as well as food and beverage manufacturers. The Forest Preserves of Cook County are also using ARPA funding to restore ecosystems, expand forest preserve systems and create greater accessibility for residents in the Southland.

The County continues to make significant strides towards the goals outlined in its Clean Energy Plan, including a 45% reduction in carbon emissions, 100% renewable electricity usage by 2030 and carbon neutrality for County-owned facilities by 2050. Cook County met its carbon emissions goal in 2021. Behavior and operational changes in facilities, coupled with upgraded energy efficient equipment, have resulted in decreased energy usage and emissions.

In 2022, the County was recognized by Peoples Gas for achieving significant reductions in natural gas usage, saving the equivalent amount of energy used in 600 homes for a year. The County is in the process of finalizing an agreement to procure off-site renewable energy which will help bolster the green economy, improve air quality and add renewable energy to the electric grid.

We must do as much as we can as fast as we can to fight climate change and we are building upon a solid foundation of accomplishments. I look forward to sharing updates about our many sustainability efforts in the coming year.

Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President

OVER \$130 MILLION IN SUSTAINABILITY INVESTMENTS FUNDED THROUGH AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

Cook County has allocated over \$1 billion to promote economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are Countywide sustainability projects rooted in equity, engagement and excellence.



Sustainable Communities

- Neighborhood Revitalization Brownfield Remediation
- South Suburban Hazardous Household Waste Facility and Satellite Collection Locations
- Businesses Reducing Impact on the Environment (BRITE) Fund
- Healthy Homes for Healthy Families
- Implementing the Southeast Cook County Land Acquisition Plan (Forest Preserve District of Cook County)
- Riparian Restoration (Forest Preserve District of Cook County)
- Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Program
- Resilience Hubs
- Cook County Sun and Save

- Invest in Cook Expansion
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Lead Pipe Removal at Vera Yates Homes and Richard Flowers Homes (Housing Authority of Cook County)
- Lead, Leaking and Obsolete Service Line Replacement Pilot Program
- RainReady Plan Implementation
- Stormwater Management Project



Smart Communities



Vital Communities

- The Cook County Water Affordability Program
- Community Conservation Corps (Forest Preserve District of Cook County)

- Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund
- Capacity-Building Investments in Food Access Sites
- Good Food Purchasing Program (Cook County Department of Public Health)
- Urban Farming Initiative Gap Analysis



Healthy Communities

Emergency Operations Planning



Safe and Thriving Communities

Cook County's investments are guided by equity to ensure all residents benefit from the County's sustainable improvements.

IN 2022, COOK COUNTY ASSISTED 48 RESIDENTS IN INSTALLING SOLAR PANELS ON THEIR HOMES THROUGH THE GROW SOLAR CHICAGOLAND GROUP BUY PROGRAM

OFF-SITE POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Cook County is working to secure a renewable energy offsite power purchase agreement (PPA). The PPA will help bolster the local green economy, improve air quality and add renewable energy to the electric grid.

The PPA is expected to generate 69,000 to 96,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy which reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 94,000 metric tons. The reduction in GHG emissions is equivalent to powering 16,000 homes.

A detailed announcement will be made in spring 2023 when contracts are finalized.



EQUITY FUND TASK FORCE REPORT

Sustainable Communities recommendations:

- Invest in climate resilient infrastructure to address decades of disinvestment in Black and Latine communities.
- Establish a Cook County Environmental Justice Policy to incorporate environmental and equity impacts in policy and program decision making.
- Support actions that improve both public health and environmental health for the overall well-being of residents, particularly in Black, Latine and low income communities.

OVER 1,431 INDIVIDUALS HAVE SIGNED THE CONSERVE COOK COUNTY PLEDGE SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2020



SIGN UP HERE: COOKCOUNTYIL.GOV/CONSERVECOOK

CONTINUED STIC WITH IT ENERGY-SAVING CHALLENGE FOR COUNTY BUILDING ENGINEERS



SEE WHERE ENERGY IS USED
TOOLS IMPLEMENTATION
CREATE A LASTING PLAN

FOOD DESERT ORDINANCE PASSED

Amended Cook County's Property Tax Incentive Program to include real estate used for expansion or renovation of existing grocery stores or vacant commercial space used for a grocery store located in a food desert (locations lacking fresh fruit, vegetables and other healthful whole foods).



RECOGNIZED BY PEOPLES GAS FOR SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN NATURAL GAS USAGE. UPDATES TO VENTILATION, BOILERS, STEAM TRAPS AND INSULATION SAVING EQUIVALENT OF ENERGY USAGE OF 600 HOMES FOR ONE YEAR

ILLEGAL DUMPING CLEANUP

Since 2018, the Department of Environment and Sustainability cleaned up **91,945 cubic yards** of illegally dumped waste in Cook County communities.



IN 2022, THE **BROWNFIELD PROGRAM** ASSESSED **66 SITES** IN THE SOUTH AND WEST SUBURBS FOR CONTAMINATION AND DEVELOPED CLEANUP AND REDEVELOPMENT PLANS.



This site in Bellwood was formerly a gas station. After cleanup from County revolving loan funds, it now contains two single family homes.

\$2.4 MILLION IN C-PACE FINANCING FOR HYDROPONIC VERTICAL FARM FACILITY IN CALUMET CITY LAUNCH

135,000 sq. ft. former Target retail store will be converted to Wilder Fields, a commercial-scale indoor vertical farm that will focus exclusively on the growth and sale of pesticide-free leafy greens. Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) funds will finance several energy efficient measures including LED grow lighting, HVAC and climate controls, estimated to save over \$8.3 million and 59,371,067 kWh of energy.

C-PACE offers commercial, industrial, institutional and large rental property owners advantageous financing for investments in energy and water efficiency, renewable energy and resilience.



8 SCHOOLS RECEIVED COOK COUNTY SOLAR SCHOOLS GRANTS

FAIR TRANSIT SOUTH COOK PILOT NEARS END OF SECOND YEAR, PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE AND EQUITABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WHILE REDUCING CONGESTION AND CARBON EMISSIONS



Partnered with Openlands to plant 41 mature shade trees native to northeast Illinois to replace dead and dying mature ash trees decimated by emerald ash borer at Maywood Courthouse.

Collaborated with Nordson Green Earth Foundation and the City of Markham to plant Miyawaki 'tiny' forest at Markham Courthouse



REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE



Installed more than 50 touchless water bottle fillers in County facilities including:

- Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office
- 18 jury rooms
- Common areas at Leighton Courthouse and Criminal Administration Building

By connecting to existing domestic water supply, the new units replace environmentally inefficient and costly 5-gallon bottled water coolers throughout the facilities.

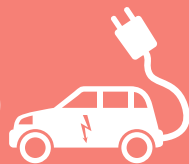


COUNTY BUILDING GHG EMISSIONS

↓ **9%**
FROM 2020 TO 2021

↓ **45%**
SINCE 2010

Our electric vehicle (EV) charging stations avoided CO2e emissions equivalent to charging **348,385** cell phones.



OVERALL COUNTY OPERATIONS GHG EMISSIONS

↓ **6%**
FROM 2020 TO 2021



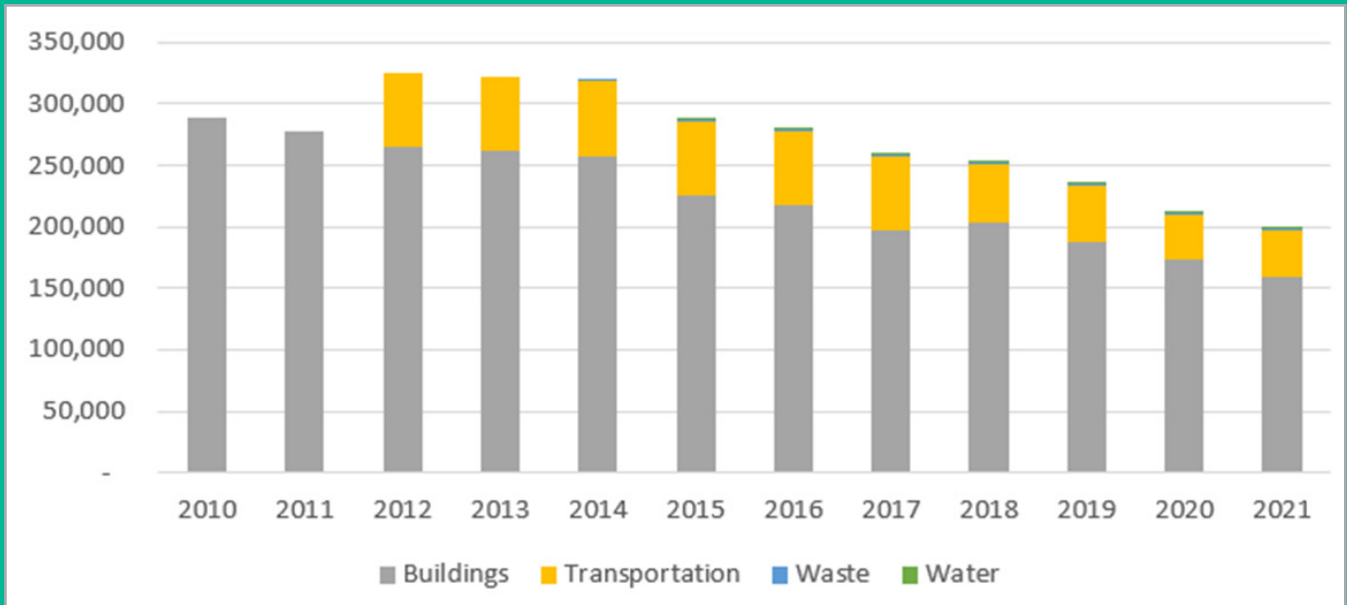
COUNTY TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS

↑ **9%**
FROM 2019 TO 2022

↓ **36%**
SINCE 2012

TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS SLIGHTLY INCREASED FROM 2020 ATTRIBUTED TO EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK

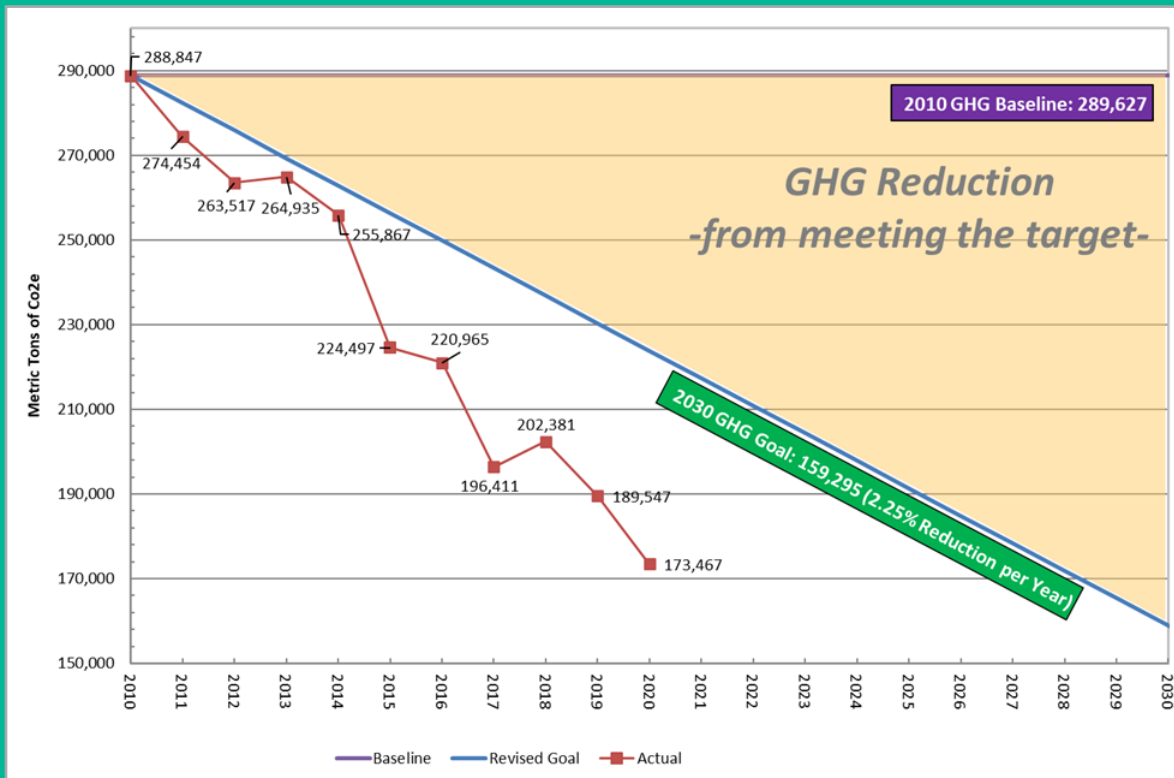
Metric Tons CO₂e* Emitted from Cook County Operations



31% overall reduction since 2010

*Carbon Dioxide Equivalent

County Building GHG Reductions and the 2050 GHG Goal



Cook County released its Clean Energy Plan in 2020 as a pathway to meet three main goals for County-owned buildings.

1

A reduction in carbon emissions by 45% by 2030



2

100% renewable electricity by 2030



3

Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050



ANNUAL UPDATES FROM CLEAN ENERGY PLAN

Immediate (Anticipated 2020-2021)	Completed	In Progress	Not Started
Develop RFP for strategic energy procurement. Include lowest bid prices and renewable energy procurement in these decisions.	X		
Finalize RFP for a turnkey solar solution for Skokie and Markham Courthouses and Cicero Records Center.		X	
Adopt and publish green building standards for performance-based design, solar ready buildings and sustainability measures.	X		
Continuing education for Cook County Department of Facilities Management employees on solar installation and upkeep.	X		
Issue RFP for in-depth building audits and energy modeling for each facility in the proposal. The goal of this solicitation would be to determine the energy usage breakdown in each facility and create a list of energy efficiency upgrades that need to occur.		X	
Verify all meter readings are accurate and up-to-date with the utility companies.		X	
Upgrade building automation system and integrate fault detection and diagnostics.		X	
Finalize roof age list and work with the Department of Capital Planning and Policy to develop a roof replacement schedule.	X		
Incorporate green building standards into all new leases, development projects and capital improvement plan projects.	X		
Explore the potential of off-site renewable energy owned by the County or power purchase agreement of off-site renewables.		X	

ANNUAL UPDATES FROM CLEAN ENERGY PLAN

Short Term (Anticipated 2021-2025)	Completed	In Progress	Not Started
Develop a building-by-building energy efficiency upgrade list. Include estimated costs and upgrade schedules.			X
Update the current LEED ordinance for new construction and major renovations of Cook County-owned and leased properties.		X	
Work with the ComEd energy efficiency program to select and implement a monitoring-based retro-commissioning project on selected buildings.		X	
Roof replacements at Markham, Rolling Meadows and Bridgeview Courthouses.		X	
Begin solar installations at Markham, Rolling Meadows and Bridgeview Courthouses.			X
Begin solar installation at Cicero Warehouse.			X
Develop a policy and strategy for submetering by department.			X
Provide annual progress on the Clean Energy Plan.		X	
Develop a strategy to reduce transportation emissions from Cook County operations and to transition away from fossil fueled vehicles.		X	
Assess opportunities for community solar either on-site with the County as an anchor subscriber or through subscription only, especially if the County's action would help increase low-cost energy available to Cook County residents.		X	
Analyze and integrate battery storage to support renewable energy developments.			X

Intermediate (Anticipated 2025-2030)	Completed	In Progress	Not Started
Implement submetering by department.			X
Complete phased roof replacement and solar installation for County facilities.			X
Procure renewable energy credits to cover the remainder of the County's electricity use.		X	

Long Term (Anticipated 2030+)	Completed	In Progress	Not Started
Conduct a thermal decarbonization analysis to adjust how heating and cooling energy is used to effectively move away from fossil fuels by fuel switching from remaining natural gas (fossil fuel) equipment to electric mechanical equipment. A thermal study determines the best way to move away from fossil fuels used for heating and cooling and creating hot water.			X
Switch fuel use away from natural gas to electric equipment based on analysis of equipment as it becomes time for replacement/retrofit.			X
Install portfolio solar rooftops where feasible and accessible as rooftops are replaced.			X
Integrate a microgrid on Department of Corrections campus.			X

Cook County Green Leadership Team
Appointed by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle

Lanetta Haynes Turner
Chief of Staff, Chair

Tom Lynch
Chief Information Officer

Zahra Ali
Chief Administrative Officer

Tanya S. Anthony
Chief Financial Officer

Xochitl Flores
Chief, Bureau of Economic Development

Velisha Haddox
Chief, Bureau of Human Resources

Elizabeth Granato
Chief, Bureau of Asset Management

Deborah Stone
Chief Sustainability Officer

**Our thanks to the many County employees
who contributed to this report, especially:**

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