Sustainability in the Suburbs
from Oak Park to Schaumburg to Joliet

(Above: Volkening Heritage Farm, Schaumburg IL)
In a Sustainable Future:

**Environmental resources** are conserved for both future human generations as well as non-human biota.

**Economic development** occurs not at the expense of the natural environment, but in a way to mitigate ecological costs and impacts.

**Equity** – social, economic, and environmental justice – governs the process of sustainable development.
Sex Sustainability in the City
Endangered and Threatened Species in IL

North Branch of Chicago River Restoration Sites

Sources: Illinois DNR (1993); North Branch Restoration Project (2009)
Chicago area business as usual growth trend vs. Metropolis Plan concept.

Image credit: Chicago Metropolis 2020
Three Paradigmatic Chicago Suburbs

Oak Park
Pop. 51,878
Area: 4.7 mi²
Density: 11,306

Schaumburg
Pop. 74,227
Area: 19 mi²
Density: 3906

Joliet
Pop. 147,433
Area: 38.1 mi²
Density: 3874

Comparison: San Francisco
Pop. 805,235 / Area: 46.7 mi² / Density: 17,245
Oak Park
The Inner Suburb

Key Features:

- High density and regulated land use
- Great public transportation
- Bike-friendly / walk-able
- Progressive environmental politics
- Sustainability culture / ethos
- Architectural innovation

Challenges:

- High cost of living (housing, taxes)
- Landlocked setting
- Lack of open space

Oak Park
Pop. 51,878
Area: 4.7 mi²
Density: 11,306
Oak Park: Transportation


Biking, walking, taking the bus or train? Easy.
Schaumburg
The "Edge City"

Key Features:

- Sustainability initiatives
- Good bike path / lane system with recent improvements
- Park district / conservation areas

Challenges:

- Sprawling development
- Lack of high-quality open space
- Car-dependent transportation
Schaumburg: Open Space

Spring Valley Nature Center / Prairie Restoration (M. Bryson)
A Green Vision for RU's Suburban Campus

In progress at the Schaumburg Campus (opened 1996):

**Sustainable landscape plan**: native plants, prairie plots, walking paths, orchard, urban farm

**Water conservation strategies**: bioswales, cisterns, rain gardens, pervious paving

**Outdoor education / recreation**: experimental wetland restoration, native plant gardens, RUrbanPioneers community garden, greenhouse, EcoSpace courtyard
Above: The "old look" at Schaumburg Campus, where parking lots of turf grass (along with many native and non-native trees) dominate the grounds. Much of the grass has been replaced by prairie plantings in spring/summer of 2011. Over time, pavement will be replaced by pervious surface to allow water retention onsite.

Right: A prescribed burn of the wetland detention pond in spring 2011, the first ever on campus. This serves to discourage non-native woody species and encourage native wetland plants.
Soil Service Day at RU's Schaumburg Campus, 20 April 2013
Joliet
The Satellite City / River Town

Key Features:
• Urban density (in places)
• Public transit access (underutilized)
• Downtown core / historic buildings
• Bike-able (to some degree)
• Pilcher Park / County Forest Preserves
• Emerging culture of sustainability (really!)

Challenges / Opportunities:
• Sprawling development
• East Side vs. West Side (access & equity)
• Quality of waterways
• Gardening and urban farming
• Sustainability & education
Joliet: Biking

Bike to Metra Map for Joliet IL (2010)
Hickory Creek in Pilcher Park, March 2011 (M. Bryson)
Hickory Creek on Joliet's East Side, March 2011 (M. Bryson)
Hickory Creek by Washington Jr. High, March 2011 (M. Bryson)
Teale Woods on Joliet's Near-West Side, 2011 (M. Bryson)
Bill and Betty Lorch's urban homestead in Joliet's Cathedral Area neighborhood, 2013 (M. Bryson)
Will County's Agricultural Heritage

Will County farmland south of Joliet, June 2006 (M. Bryson)
Joliet: Urban Farming & Education

Joliet Park District Organic Community Garden / USF-Cool Joliet's Community Garden
Joliet: Urban Farming & Education

Student garden at **Hufford Junior High**, Joliet (courtesy of District 86)
Joliet: Urban Farming & Education

JTHS-owned open space west of JT Central Campus, downtown Joliet (M. Bryson)
Growing Power's **Chicago Lights Urban Farm** in Cabrini-Green, Chicago (M. Bryson)
The Improbable Is Possible

Growing Power's Chicago Lights Urban Farm in Cabrini-Green, Chicago (M. Bryson)
Growing Power's Chicago Lights Urban Farm in Cabrini-Green, Chicago (M. Bryson)
The Improbable Is Possible

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (Adrian Ayers Fisher)
Where to Start? How about here at JJC?

- Biology and Environmental Science
- Horticulture and Landscape Design
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts and Humanities
- Experimental Farm and Agricultural Sciences
- Students = energy!
Will County Fair in Peotone, August 2011 (M. Bryson)
Identifying Oaks at **Morton Arboretum**, Lisle IL, 2011 (L. Bryson)
I&M Canal at the Rock Run Access, 2009 (source: Joe Balynas)