



Lake County Sustainability Initiatives 2026

Lake County Sustainability Page



AIR



BIODIVERSITY



ENERGY



TRANSPORTATION



WASTE



WATER



FUTURE PLANNING



GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAM



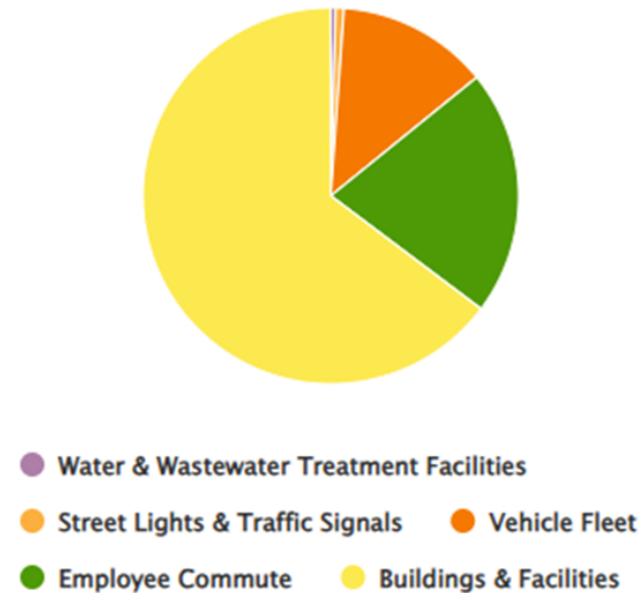
SUSTAINABLE MODEL ORDINANCE
INVENTORY

Air – Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory

- In 2024, Lake County produced 27,623 MT of CO₂e.

Scope	Sector	CO ₂ e
Scope 1&2	Buildings & Facilities	17,884
Scope 2	Streetlights & Traffic Signals	199
Scope 1	Vehicle Fleet	3,597
Scope 3	Employee Commute	5,829
Scope 1	Wastewater Treatment Facilities	114

CO₂e By Category



Biodiversity – Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan



Lake County's Urban Forest Challenges

- Tree canopy is not evenly distributed. Communities range from 9% to 62%.
- Buckthorn makes up an estimated 53% of all trees in Lake County. Buckthorn is an invasive woody plant.
- Green industries are in need of a skilled workforce but workforce development opportunities are limited.

Most abundant trees in Lake County

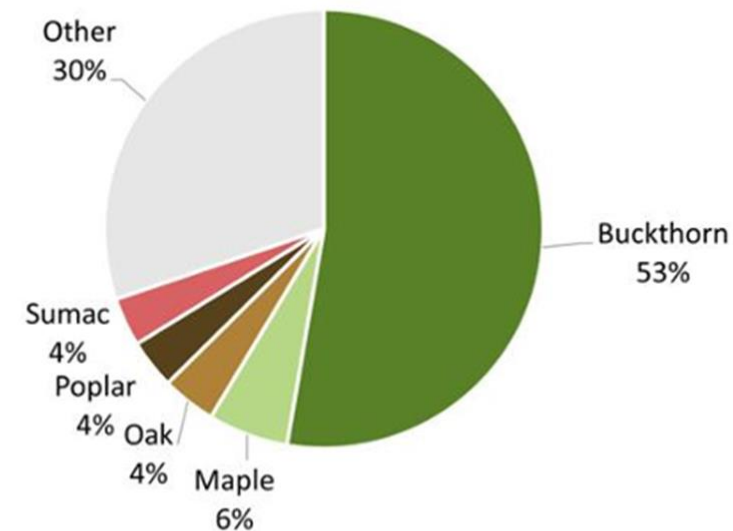


Photo credit: Chicago Region Trees Initiative, Lake County Urban Forestry Summary

DAVEY RESOURCE GROUP

Biodiversity – Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan



Lake County's Urban Forest

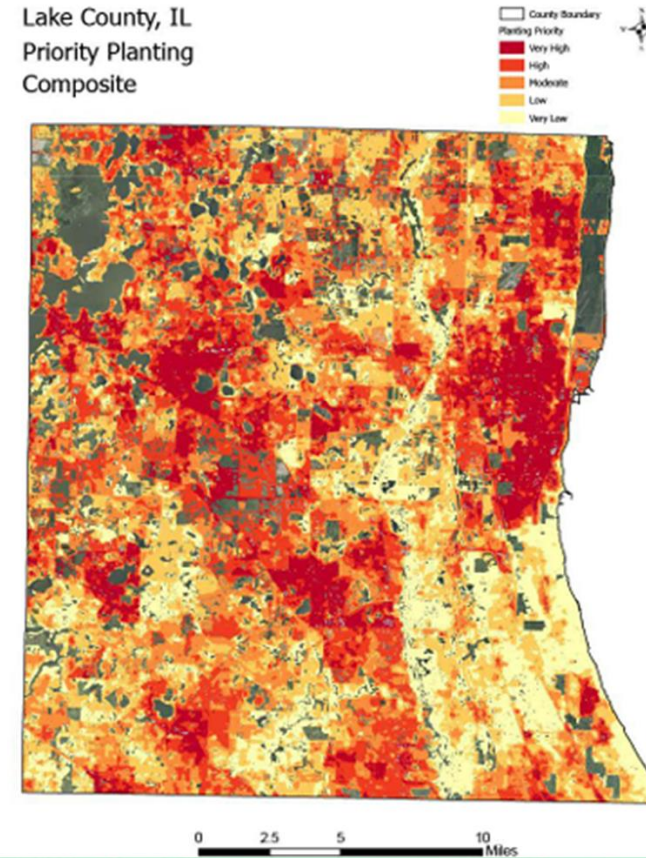
What are the opportunities for growth?

- 85,829 acres of land (28% of Lake County's total land area) could support additional tree plantings
- Lake County has the following community priorities to drive tree planting: **reduce stormwater runoff, address urban heat disparities, distribute trees equitably, and improve health outcomes.**

Lake County's Tree Planting Program

Will distribute \$2.5 million to Lake County's municipal partners who seek to plant trees to mitigate stormwater impacts

Lake County, IL
Priority Planting
Composite



DAVEY RESOURCE GROUP

Energy - Regional Operations and Communications Facility



- The ROC is Lake County Government's first Net Zero building, meaning the facility will consume no more energy than is produced from renewable sources. Net Zero energy can offer significant operational savings.
- The ROC will be powered by:
 - Solar power from the Sun!
 - Geothermal energy from the Earth!
 - The ROC will also have real-time energy usage tracking so energy utilization can be monitored.



Energy - Green Workforce Development



CEJA Waukegan Hub Programs

- Job Training in Clean Energy Fields
- Paid participation while in the Program
- Wrap-around services to participants
- Career Support
- Support for Environmental Justice Communities
- Sustainable and High-Paying Jobs



CEJA ILLINOIS

Climate & Equitable Jobs Act
Workforce Programs



Energy - Residential Solar Group Buy



Switch Together Chicagoland

Group buying for solar & batteries

Open to anyone in the Chicagoland area, including Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane, McHenry, and Kendall County residents.

Join the other 101,805 households who have registered for our programs.

Register for free and without obligation

Which type of installation are you interested in?

Solar (Battery Optional) ➤

Battery Only ➤



Program Dashboard for Lake County

Registrations

New in Illinois 6 Solar 2026	92
Lake County All-Time	1,231

Accepted and Paid

New in Illinois 6 Solar 2026	20
Lake County All-Time	281

Installations

New in Illinois 6 Solar 2026	Actual: 0
Lake County All-Time	Actual: 82

Total Added Solar Capacity

New in Illinois 6 Solar 2026	Actual: 0 kW
Lake County All-Time	Actual: 835.1 kW

Transportation - County Fleet Electrification



Your Electrification Criteria

Showing vehicle suitability based on the following criteria

Edit

Lifetime Usage

Vehicles with > **100,000 mi** driven total

Avg. Fuel Efficiency

Vehicles that typically return < **26 MPG**

Avg. Daily Range

Vehicles that typically drive < **200 mi** per day

Max Daily Range

Vehicles that always drive < **300 mi** per day

Est. Annual Fuel Savings

Vehicles that can save > **\$ 9,300** in fuel

Est. Annual Emissions Savings

Vehicles that can save > **91 kg** CO2

Summary



■ **Excellent** - 16%

■ **Good** - 83%

■ **Okay** - 1%



100% of your fleet is suitable for electrification

Waste - Single-use Plastics Ban LakeCounty

- The Prohibition on Single Use Plastics (SUPs) went into effect on January 1, 2023.
- Fifteen vending machines swapped plastic bottles for glass and aluminum containers.
- Non-plastic items are used at the Coffee Kiosk in Waukegan, which serves 150+ customers per day.
- Millions of plastic items are avoided being used.
- Recycle Coach [HERE](#)



Water - Tree Planting Program

- Through this program, publicly maintained and publicly accessible lands could receive:
 - Free native trees from local nurseries that were planted on qualified sites by a tree planting crew.
 - Educational outreach materials that could be shared with residents about the importance of urban forestry in Lake County.



Future Planning - Roadmap to Decarbonization

INTRODUCTION

Lake County created the Roadmap to Decarbonization to support our strategic plan goal of sustainability. The Roadmap is a flexible planning schedule that supports long-range planning by matching up short-term and long-term goals with specific strategies.

Lake County government is committed to achieving net zero emissions in its operations in two phases.

Phase 1: Reducing the direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions of its operations, from its 2014-2017 baseline, by 50% by 2030.

Phase 2: Procuring 100% renewable energy and reducing emissions, from its 2014-2017 baseline, by 90% or more by 2040.

Progress made from 2017 to 2024 in emission output

Sector	CO ₂ e
Buildings & Facilities	25,967
Streetlights & Traffic Signals	310
Vehicle Fleet	3,122
Employee Commute	6,100
Wastewater Treatment Facilities	324

In 2017, Lake County produced 35,823 metric tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e).

Sector	CO ₂ e
Buildings & Facilities	17,884
Streetlights & Traffic Signals	199
Vehicle Fleet	3,597
Employee Commute	5,829
Wastewater Treatment Facilities	114

In 2024, Lake County produced 27,623 metric tons of CO₂e.

The top three sources of emissions are

1. Buildings and Facilities, heating, cooling, and powering our facilities
2. Employee Commute, gasoline burned and electricity used
3. Vehicle Fleet, our gasoline, diesel and electricity used

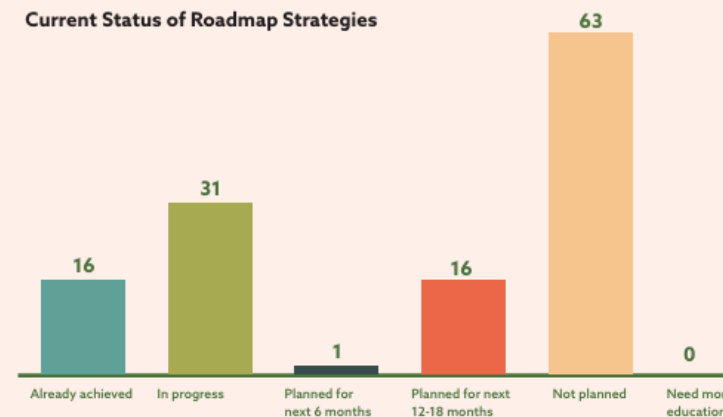
👉 Building and Facilities has seen the greatest reductions but is still first.

👉 Employee Commute emissions have lowered but remains second.

👉 Vehicle Fleet emissions have increased.

👉 This will directly measure progress over time. By completing Roadmap strategies, we anticipate these numbers decreasing over time.

Current Status of Roadmap Strategies



Sustainability is a top priority of the 2023 Lake County Strategic Plan. The County is focused on leading the effort to prevent further increases in global temperature, mitigate climate change effects, and protect and enhance our natural environment.

Green Business Program



- **Award certification in five categories:**

- **Water Conservation**
- **Energy Conservation**
- **Pollution Prevention**
- **Solid Waste Conservation**
- **Transportation/Air Quality**



- **Businesses must meet a minimum number of actions in any category to be considered for an award, but not all categories are required.**
- **Staff reach out to applicants to request additional evidence for completion of some actions (EV infrastructure, REC purchases, composting services, etc.).**
- **After contact and confirmation, the certification is issued once and remains in place.**

Sustainable Model Ordinance Inventory



Ordinances

Biodiversity

Energy

Food

Waste

Other

Native Trees and Plants

[Ordinance 24-0924](#) - Amended August 13, 2024

Related to the enhanced planting and protection of native tree and plant species in unincorporated Lake County. The amendments included modifying the plant materials list to remove invasive or disease-affected trees, adding trees that are either native or adapted to future climate conditions, reducing required minimum plant caliper width and increasing species mix limits to ensure more biodiverse and resilient plantings.

Bird-Friendly Building Design

[Ordinance 24-0731](#) - Adopted June 11, 2024

Amendments to the building code require bird-friendly building design as part of new construction or major renovation of non-residential development in unincorporated areas of Lake County. These projects must use at least 80 percent bird-friendly glass on their exteriors from ground level to 100 feet high. This ordinance also applies to non-residential accessory structures such as free-standing glass walls, accessory storage buildings, glass-enclosed gazebos and pavilions and similar structures. [Visit the bird-friendly building design page for more information.](#)

Landscaping

[Ordinance 09-2054](#) - Amended October 13, 2009

Introduced various sustainable landscaping-related amendments, including enhanced parking lot landscaping features, best management practices for landscaping and low impact development features.

Other Green Components of Lake County Operations and Programs



- Annual state and federal sustainability legislative agenda
- Grant and Watershed Management Assistance Grant award distribution (10 projects worth \$232,100 in funding)
- Wetland Restoration Fund (WRF) mitigation program for developers to offset wetland impacts
- Existing and planned Shared Use Paths for nonmotorized transit
- Ride Lake County countywide paratransit service
- Native highway landscaping
- C-PACE Financing