US EPA Region 5
Environmental Finance Center
for Water Infrastructure

GREEN INFRASTUCTURE PRIORITIZATION AND FUNDING RESOURCES REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK, ILLINOIS

May 9, 2025

delta institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Delta Institute (Delta) developed this Green Infrastructure (GI) prioritization and funding resources report in response to a technical assistance request from the Village of Oak Park, Illinois (the Village). The Village has a combined sewer system that discharges to interceptors owned and administered by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). In their technical assistance request, Village staff described concerns about urban flooding, including "overland flooding, surface ponding, seepage, and basement sewer backups." The Village requested assistance with identifying "district-scale opportunities" for GI to address urban flooding and meet GI goals set by the Village Board.

Delta analyzed 26 Village-owned sites to determine which sites the Village might prioritize for GI development. These sites included administrative buildings, three fire stations, and several parking lots. Delta collaborated with Village staff to identify eight prioritization criteria, which Delta used to evaluate where GI installation would have the greatest impact and most align with Village priorities. The prioritization criteria included: flood risk, site feasibility for GI installation, impervious surface coverage, proximity to existing schools and public libraries, and others. Please refer to *Table 1* and the map contained in *Figure 3* within the body of the report for the final GI prioritization results for Village-owned sites.

The Village also has an existing Green Alleys Program, so Delta evaluated which parts of the Village might be the best candidates for future green alleys. Delta analyzed the alleys on a census block group basis because alleys are fairly uniformly distributed across the Village. There are 53 block groups across 14 census tracts within the Village; however, Delta and the Village only included block groups with at least 30% of their area within the known extent of sandy soils due to the improved performance of permeable pavement in these areas. As a result, Delta evaluated 22 block groups for green alley installations using an abbreviated set of prioritization criteria. Refer to *Table 2* and the map in *Figure 4* within the body of the report for the final GI prioritization results for Village-owned sites.

Delta reviewed several funding resources that the Village might pursue to support GI design and construction at the priority sites. These resources included the US Environmental Protection Agency Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grants program, Federal Emergency Management Agency Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program, the Illinois Environmental Protection (IEPA) Agency Water Pollution Control Loan Program, IEPA GI Grant Opportunities program, and MWRD GI Partnership program; please see section *4.0 - Funding Opportunities* for details. The Village has previously applied for and received funding through the MWRD GI Partnership program. Of the other programs, the IEPA GI Grant Opportunities program may be the most immediately relevant for the expected scale of Village GI projects. The Village also might consider the IEPA Water Pollution Control Loan Program as a financing option for a multi-site GI installation program.

Delta's intent is for this report to serve as an actionable resource that the Village can use to guide development and funding of GI projects within the Village. Please do not hesitate to contact Delta for any future SRF or water infrastructure technical assistance needs. Thank you for your partnership on this scope of work.

About Delta Institute's Region 5 Environmental Finance Center

As one of the EPA Region 5 EFCs, Delta Institute is providing targeted technical assistance centered around funding for projects that achieve the goals of either the Clean Water Act or the Safe Drinking Water Act. These projects focus on water infrastructure for local governments, states, Tribal governments, and non-governmental organizations. Delta and our partners are engaging with historically underserved communities that have struggled to access federal water infrastructure funding.

Over the next five years of EFC operations, we plan that more than **200 communities will benefit from our eligible clean water and drinking water finance technical assistance services**. Learn more at delta-institute.org/epa-region-5-water-infrastructure/.

Acknowledgements

This project was produced via cooperative agreement 4Q00E03341 with the US Environmental Protection Agency.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 - INTRODUCTION

Delta Institute's (Delta) Environmental Finance Center (EFC) has developed this Green Infrastructure (GI) prioritization and funding resources report on behalf of the Village of Oak Park, Illinois (the Village). Delta hopes that this report may serve as a resource for the City to guide the planning, funding, and implementation of GI projects on Village-owned properties, such that Village can mitigate localized flooding, reduce stormwater pollutant loading, and advance its GI goals.

1.1 - Village of Oak Park Background

The Village is located in Cook County on the western border of Chicago and has a footprint of approximately 4.7 square miles. The Village is a suburban community, home to 54,583 residents, who are represented by a local government consisting of a seven-member Village Board and Village Manager. Village residents comprise a variety of races, ethnicities, and national backgrounds, and just over 13% of residents speak a language other than English at home. The median household income (MHI) within the Village is approximately $108,000, and 6.7% of residents have household incomes below the federally designated poverty level. Households with incomes below the poverty level are concentrated in the central third of the Village, north and south of North Boulevard. Land use within the Village is predominantly residential with a few commercial corridors, such as Lake Street and Madison Street. The Village is fully developed and has no large undeveloped parcels.

The Village has a combined sewer system, which collects sanitary wastewater from homes and businesses and stormwater runoff from precipitation that falls on impervious surfaces. Interceptors owned and administered by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) receive all combined sewer flows from the Village's system. MWRD treats combined sewer flows from the Village and several other communities at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant. Refer to the Village of Oak Park Combined Sewer System Master Plan Report (MWH, 2014) for additional details regarding the Village's combined sewer system.

Before the development of the modern wastewater and stormwater management systems that currently serve Oak Park, Chicago, and the rest of Cook County, the Village was historically situated on a continental divide that split the Mississippi River and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basins. Rainfall on one side of that divide would ultimately flow into the Gulf of Mexico, whereas rainfall on the other side would flow into the North Atlantic Ocean. The Village is now located within both the Chicago/Calumet and Des Plaines River watersheds, both of which feed into the Mississippi River basin. However, as noted above, the Village's combined sewer system collects most precipitation that falls within the Village. Maps showing the location of the historical continental divide and MWRD's combined sewer system boundaries are provided in *Figure 1*.

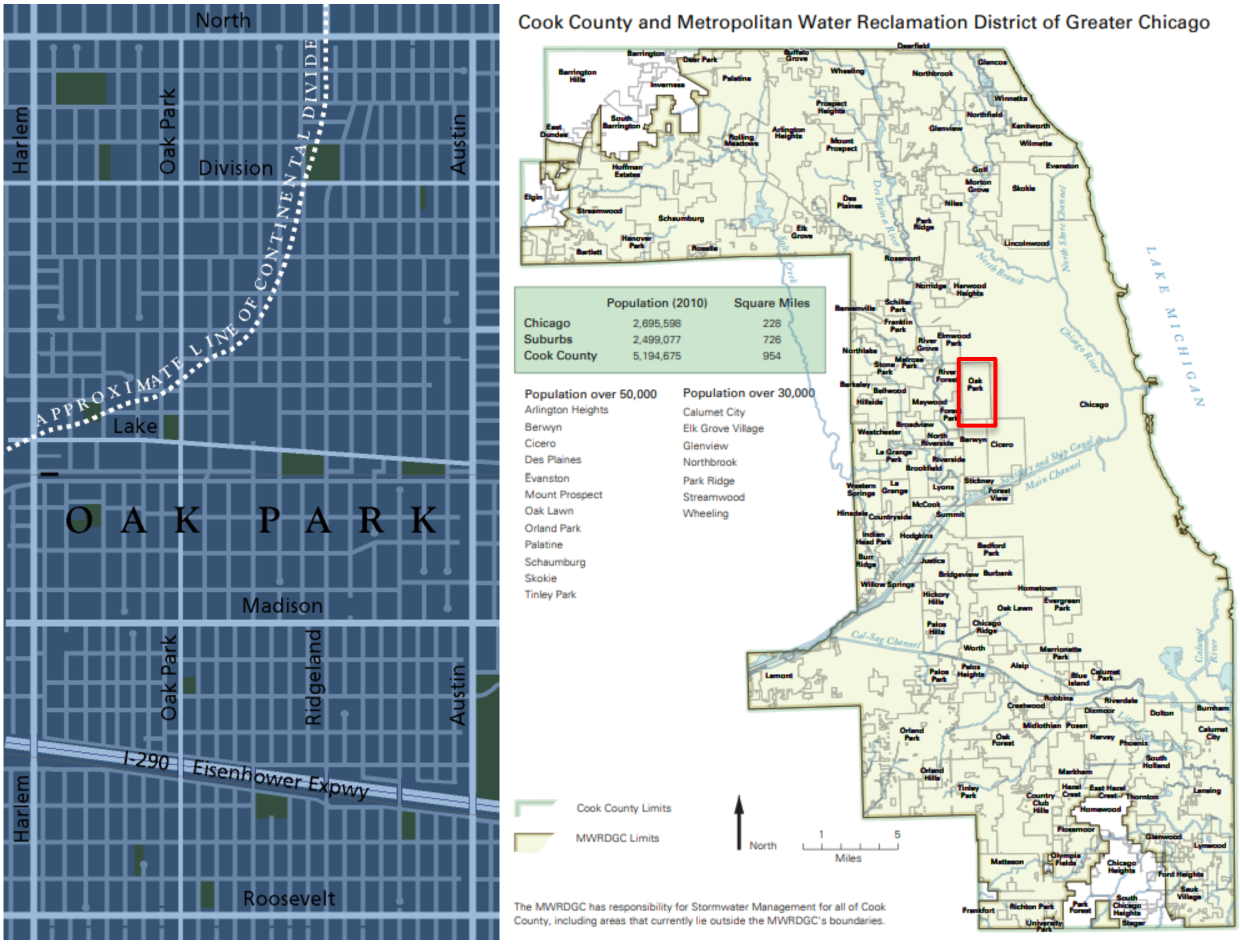


Figure 1. Location of historical continental divide separating the Mississippi River and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basins (left) and MWRD sewer collection system service area boundary (right) (Oak Park River Forest Museum, 2007; MWRD, 2023).

The Village has set goals to expand green stormwater infrastructure development. On August 1, 2022, the Village of Oak Park's Board of Trustees declared a climate emergency and adopted the Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) plan. One of the plan's six main commitments is to establish 30% of Oak Park's land as GI or areas with enhanced park management. The Village is in the process of determining the current baseline for GI and opportunities for progress towards that goal. This report is a part of that effort. Following the completion of this report, the Village will complete a more in-depth GI study to determine the current GI baseline and identify specific GI projects to advance towards the 30% goal.

1.2 - Technical Assistance Request

The Village submitted a technical assistance request to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who approved the request for Delta in May 2023. In the technical assistance request, Village staff described an "overall high risk of urban flooding" within the Village, including "overland flooding, surface ponding, seepage, and basement sewer backups." The request also noted that areas with the highest urban flooding risk are "the northeast corner of the village and south of Madison Street." While GI is currently limited in the Village – "in part due to concerns about clayey soils," the Village requested assistance with identifying "district-scale opportunities" for GI.

Through subsequent meetings with the Village, Delta developed a technical assistance scope of work intended to help the Village explore strategies to address urban flooding through GI development. This scope of work consisted of the following primary activities:

1. Developing a GI project prioritization methodology;
2. Identifying and prioritizing potential GI projects; and
3. Developing a funding strategy for GI project development that includes guidance concerning the Illinois Water Pollution Control Loan Program (i.e., the state's Clean Water State Revolving Fund [CWSRF] program) and other relevant funding resources.

Support Delta provides through the EFC must focus on projects that are eligible for State Revolving Fund (SRF) financing, which EPA primarily intends for public infrastructure. For that reason, Delta's technical assistance scope of work focused on GI opportunities for Village-owned sites, where the Village has authority to design and install projects. However, the Village is also interested in expanding GI on private property. To support residential GI development, the Village has contracted with Greenprint Partners to develop the residential GI program (Rainscapes) in parallel with Delta's EFC scope of work. Delta's team has coordinated with Greenprint Partners to align the public GI prioritization process with the residential GI program, where appropriate.

2.0 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SITE PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY

The following section summarizes the methodology Delta used to evaluate Village-owned land parcels to determine which sites to prioritize for GI development. Delta evaluated the Village-owned sites using a geospatial analysis of different criteria that represent a site's suitability for GI and alignment with Village priorities. These criteria included localized flood risk, impervious surface coverage in the area around each site, the site's proximity to educational institutions, and other criteria for measuring the appropriateness or impact of installing GI at a given site. The magnitude of each criterion varies across the Village spatially, meaning some sites may score highly or lowly for a certain criterion. For example, flood risk is higher in certain areas of the Village than it is in others. Delta assigned a weight to each criterion based on its importance for measuring GI suitability or alignment with Village priorities and calculated an overall GI prioritization score for each site by summing the weighted criteria.

2.1 - Village-Owned Parcels and Alleys

Delta analyzed two categories of Village-controlled sites for GI project development. These categories included standalone Village-owned parcels and alleys, which are both described in more detail in the following sections. Delta did not include Village rights-of-way in this analysis, but the Village should also consider GI installations in their rights-of-way, similar to the Oak Park Avenue Streetscape project, to achieve the Village's GI goals.

2.1.1 - Village-Owned Parcels

The Village provided Delta with a list of Village-owned properties to consider for potential GI development. Delta has listed the final 26 Village-owned sites included in the analysis below. These sites comprise Village administrative facilities, three fire stations, and several parking lots.

1. Avenue Parking Garage
2. Fire Station #1
3. Fire Station #2
4. Fire Station #3
5. Oak Park Public Works
6. Oak Park Village Hall
7. Parking Lot #1
8. Parking Lot #3
9. Parking Lot #7
10. Parking Lot #15
11. Parking Lot #24
12. Parking Lot #25A
13. Parking Lot #25F
14. Parking Lot #25I
15. Parking Lot #25P
16. Parking Lot #29
17. Parking Lot #30
18. Parking Lot #31
19. Parking Lot #33
20. Parking Lot #36
21. Parking Lot #55
22. Parking Lot #68
23. Parking Lot #103
24. Parking Lot #114
25. Parking Lot #118
26. Central Pumping Station

This list of sites considered for GI development does not include every Village-owned parcel because Village staff and Delta determined that several sites should be excluded from the GI prioritization analysis for various reasons. These reasons for exclusion include the following:

- **Existing GI Development**: The Village has already installed or is in the process of installing GI in several locations, including Parking Lot #10 and along a section of Oak Park Avenue. Delta excluded sites where there is minimal capacity for additional GI.
- **Incompatibility of the Site with GI**: Some sites have existing uses that would not support GI development. While the South Pumping Station (withing the Barrie Park parcel) and North Pumping Station have space for GI development, both sites contain buried water infrastructure. GI that would allow for stormwater infiltration is not appropriate in such sites, so Delta excluded these sites from the analysis.
- **Lack of Space for GI**: Several sites, including the Holley Court Parking Garage and Lake and Forest Parking Garage, have little to no room for meaningful GI installations. Delta excluded these sites.

2.1.2 – Village Alleys

As a parallel investigation, Delta also assisted the Village with determining which alleys to prioritize for GI installation (i.e., “green alleys”). Alleys are often prone to flooding and may not have stormwater inlets. Green alleys are a GI strategy intended to improve stormwater drainage and primarily involve the installation of permeable pavers. Replacing asphalt with permeable pavers allows stormwater to infiltrate into the soils below the alley. *Figure 2* shows an existing green alley installed in Oak Park. The Village has an existing green alleys program, and, prior to this analysis, the Village had installed permeable pavers in several alleys to reduce stormwater, sediment, and nutrient runoff into the combined sewer system. Existing green alleys in the Village are located in areas of known sandy soils to maximize pavement performance, as sandy soils have a higher infiltration rate than soils with a high clay content.

Figure 2. Existing green alley in Oak Park, installed in 2014 (Terra Engineering, Ltd., 2015).

The green alley evaluation was a separate analysis because there are limited types of GI appropriate for alleys (i.e., permeable pavers) and because alleys are fairly uniformly distributed across the Village. Delta's analysis considered green alley installation sites on a block-group basis, resulting in 53 block groups across 14 census tracts. The block group is the smallest level of analysis published by the US Census Bureau for sample data and is used in other datasets provided by the Village and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) (US Census Bureau, 2020a). Delta and the Village excluded block groups that had less than 30% of their area within the known extent of sandy soils due to the improved performance of permeable pavement in these areas. As a result, Delta analyzed 22 block groups for green alley installations. Once the Village exhausts the list of alleys within the known sandy soils area, the Village may consider gathering additional data regarding soils in other parts of the Village.

2.2 - Site Selection and Prioritization Criteria

Delta collaborated with the Village to identify criteria for measuring the potential feasibility, impact, and benefits of GI at the 26 sites. Using criteria that the Village considers important allows for a standardized methodology of evaluating and ranking potential sites, such that the highest-ranking sites are those that meet as many of the Village's goals as possible. The criteria established were a combination of environmental and social variables, such as flood risk, impervious surface coverage, proximity to schools and libraries, area available for GI, and others. To limit the length of this report, Delta has described the prioritization criteria methodology, including the list of criteria, definitions for each criterion, and the process for choosing the criteria, in a separate supplemental document.

The Village and Delta assigned weights to the GI site prioritization criteria through an iterative process. The team proposed and adjusted criteria weights depending on how useful they were assumed to be to the Village's aims to reduce flooding, install GI on 30% of Village-owned land, and distribute GI benefits.

2.3 - Site Prioritization Analysis

Delta used ArcGIS Pro to geospatially analyze the 26 sites based on the eight site prioritization criteria. Based on the geospatial data for each criterion, Delta calculated raw scores for all eight criteria at each site. Due to the variety of prioritization criteria, these raw scores had different types of units of measurement. For example, the proximity scores were in units of feet (i.e., distance from a site to a green space or pedestrian corridor), the area available scores were in square feet, and flood risk scores were on a scale from 1 to 10 (i.e., based on CMAP's flood susceptibility rankings).

To account for the variation in units for measurement, Delta used the ArcGIS Pro Composite Index creation tool to convert the raw scores for each criterion to an indexed scale from 1 to 5, with 1 encompassing the lowest raw scores and 5 encompassing the highest raw scores. In other words, the raw scores were evenly distributed among each value from 1 to 5, such that all five values encompassed a range of raw scores (e.g., for the area available criterion, sites smaller than ~5,000 square feet received an indexed score of 1, sites between ~5,000 square feet and ~10,000 square feet received an indexed score of 2, and so on). Delta reverse-indexed the proximity scores to maintain consistency in direction among variables and prioritize sites closer to community anchors, green space, or pedestrian corridors (e.g., sites within ~40 feet of a pedestrian corridor received an indexed score of 5 whereas sites greater than 900 feet from a pedestrian corridor received an indexed score of 1).

Delta assigned weighted scores for each site by multiplying the indexed scores for all 8 criteria by the corresponding weight. Delta took the sum of the weighted scores to develop a final prioritization score for each site. These results are presented in Section 3.1.

Delta applied a similar prioritization methodology using ArcGIS Pro for the alleys, except with fewer prioritization criteria. The weighted prioritization scores for the alleys are presented in Section 3.2.

3.0 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SITE PRIORITIZATION RESULTS

The following section presents the results of the prioritization analysis for both the Village-owned parcels and green alleys. Each potential site and alley has a prioritization score, where the larger values indicate the site is more suitable for GI development based on the prioritization criteria.

3.1 - Village-Owned Parcel Prioritization Results

Table 1 compiles the final GI prioritization results for each of the 26 Village-owned sites. For each site, the table includes the final weighted prioritization score and possible GI types for the site. Sites are listed by prioritization score, ranging from 1 to 5 with the highest scores indicating the highest priority.

GI project type suggestions are based on Delta's knowledge about the site and supplemented with visual inspection via satellite map imagery. The Village will need to further evaluate GI options for each site at the detailed design phase. For additional reference information on GI options, installation considerations, and best practices, refer to Delta's Design Guide for Green Stormwater Infrastructure Best Management Practices using the following link: https://delta-institute.org/publication/green-infrastructure-designs-guide/. Delta will also share a copy of the design guide along with this report.

Delta has mapped all 26 sites and their GI prioritization rankings and has shared that map in *Figures 3 and 4*. The scores listed in that map correspond with the scores provided in *Table 1*.

Taken together, the surface area available for GI across all 26 sites is approximately 481,700 square feet, whereas the Village surface area is approximately 4.70 square miles (131,028,000 square feet). If the Village were to install GI on all 26 sites, that GI would account for about 0.37% of the Village surface area. To achieve the 30% GI goal, the Village would likely need to account for green alleys, projects in the right-of-way, Village parks with enhanced management, and residential GI projects in the Rainscapes program. More information regarding the area available determinations for the 26 sites is included in the ArcGIS data package that Delta provided along with this report.

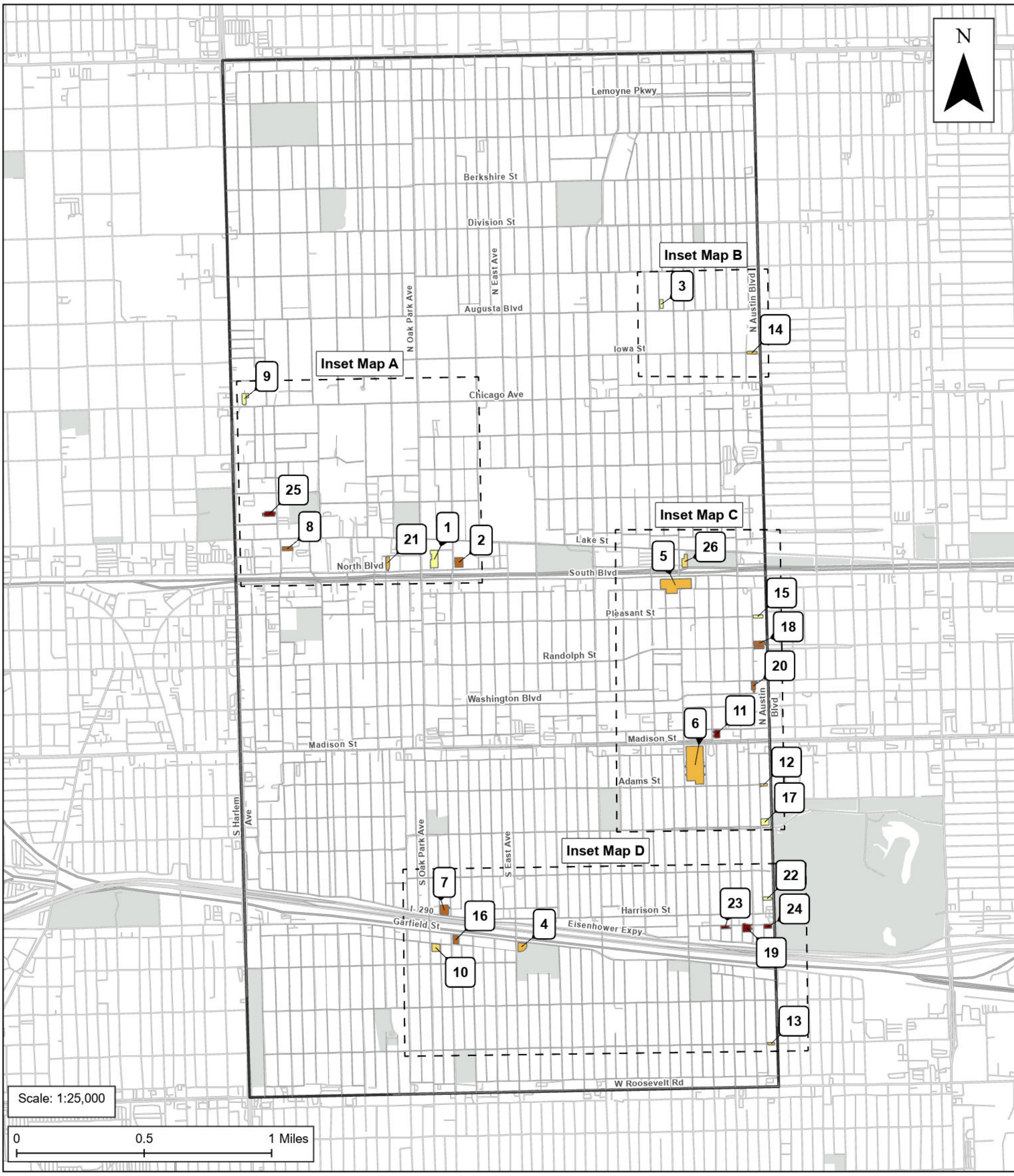
Table 1. Final Site Prioritization Scores, Potential GI Projects, and Site Considerations

Site ID #	Site Name	Prioritization Score	Potential GI for Site	Site Considerations
19	Parking Lot #33	3.80	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters	Space for bioswale, existing plantings could be modified
24	Parking Lot #114	3.65	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	Small site, limited space for GI
11	Parking Lot #24	3.50	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters	Adequate space for bioswale, existing plantings could be modified
23	Parking Lot #103	3.50	Permeable Pavers	Small site, limited space for GI
25	Parking Lot #118	3.45	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters	In known sandy soils area, possible space for bioswale
2	Fire Station #1	3.35	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	In known sandy soils area, existing plantings could be modified
7	Parking Lot #1	3.35	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters, Urban Tree Planting	In known sandy soils area, adequate space for bioswale
8	Parking Lot #3	3.30	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters, Urban Tree Planting	In known sandy soils area, adequate space for bioswale
16	Parking Lot #29	3.30	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters, Urban Tree Planting, Box Tree Filter	In known sandy soils area, existing plantings could be modified
18	Parking Lot #31	3.30	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters, Box Tree Filter	Existing planters could be replaced with bioswale
20	Parking Lot #36	3.30	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters	Possible space for bioswale, existing plantings could be modified
4	Fire Station #3	3.25	Stormwater Planters, Rain Garden, Permeable Pavement	Existing plantings could be modified, space for rain garden
5	Oak Park Public Works Department	3.25	Stormwater Pavers, Permeable Pavers, Green Roof	Existing plantings could be modified, assess added load of green roof expansion
6	Oak Park Village Hall	3.25	Permeable Pavers, Urban Tree Planting, Bioswale, Green Roof, Rain Garden	Space for rain gardens or bioswales in existing grassy areas, bioswale potential in parking lot
13	Parking Lot #25F	3.25	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	Small site, limited space for GI
14	Parking Lot #25I	3.25	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	Small site, limited space for GI
21	Parking Lot #55	3.25	Permeable Pavers	Small site, limited space for GI
10	Parking Lot #15	3.15	Permeable Pavers, Bioswale, Stormwater Planters	In known sandy soils area, adequate space for bioswale
12	Parking Lot	3.15	Permeable Pavers,	Small site, limited space for

Site ID #	Site Name	Prioritization Score	Potential GI for Site	Site Considerations
	#25A		Stormwater Planters	GI
26	Central Pumping Station	3.15	Green Roof	Infiltration not appropriate above pump station
1	Avenue Parking Garage	3.05	Stormwater Planters, Box Tree Filter	Limited space, existing plantings could be modified
15	Parking Lot #25P	3.05	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	Small site, limited space for GI
3	Fire Station #2	2.75	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters, Box Tree Filter	Outside sandy soils area, underdrains may be needed
9	Parking Lot #7	2.40	Permeable Pavers	Small site, limited space for GI
17	Parking Lot #30	2.35	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	Existing plantings could be modified
22	Parking Lot #68	2.30	Permeable Pavers, Stormwater Planters	Small site, limited space for GI, existing plantings could be modified

Figures 3 and 4 (following pages). Map of Village-owned sites with prioritization scores indicating which sites may have the most GI impact and best align with Village goals. The first map shows the entire Village, while the second map includes inset maps of the Village areas containing the 26 Village-owned sites.

Oak Park Green Infrastructure Site Prioritization Village Map



Site #	Site Name	Prioritization Score	Site #	Site Name	Prioritization Score
1	Avenue Parking Garage	3.05	13	Parking Lot #25F	3.25
2	Fire Station #1	3.35	14	Parking Lot #25I	3.25
3	Fire Station #2	2.75	15	Parking Lot #25P	3.05
4	Fire Station #3	3.25	16	Parking Lot #29	3.30
5	Oak Park Public Works	3.25	17	Parking Lot #30	2.35
6	Oak Park Village Hall	3.25	18	Parking Lot #31	3.30
7	Parking Lot #1	3.35	19	Parking Lot #33	3.80
8	Parking Lot #3	3.30	20	Parking Lot #36	3.30
9	Parking Lot #7	2.40	21	Parking Lot #55	3.25
10	Parking Lot #15	3.15	22	Parking Lot #68	2.30
11	Parking Lot #24	3.50	23	Parking Lot #103	3.50
12	Parking Lot #25A	3.15	24	Parking Lot #114	3.65
			25	Parking Lot #118	3.45
			26	Central Pumping Station	3.15

Legend

Oak Park Owned Properties

Green Infrastructure Site Scores (Higher Values Indicate Higher Priority)

- 2.30 - 3.05
- 3.05 - 3.15
- 3.15 - 3.25
- 3.25 - 3.35
- 3.35 - 3.80
- Oak Park Village Boundary
- Inset Map Extent

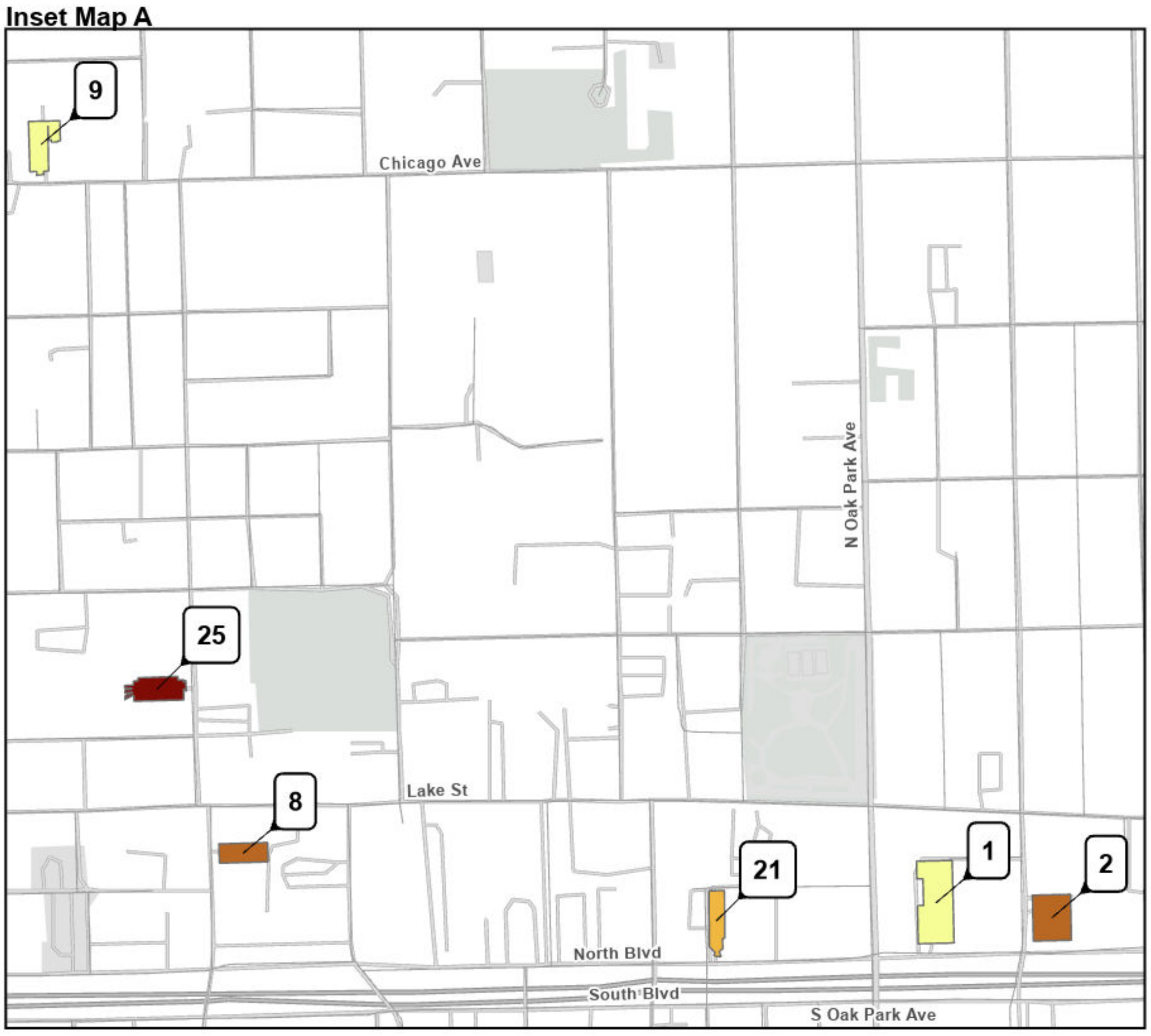
Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (2020 Decennial Census), U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2011-2015), U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line Data, Village of Oak Park, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, ESRI.

delta institute

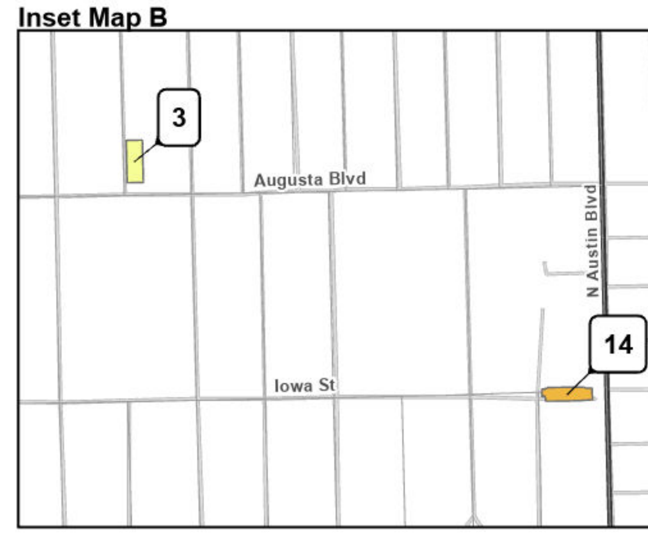
Oak Park Green Infrastructure Site Prioritization Inset Maps

Inset Map D

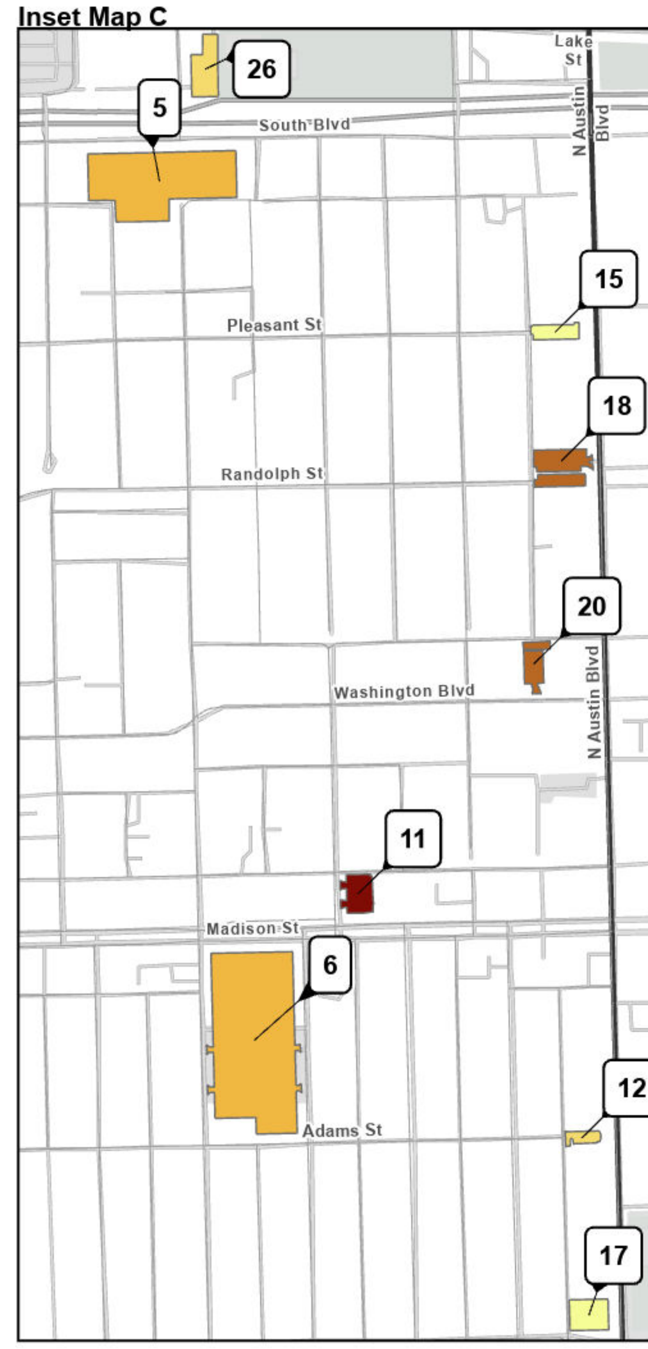
Inset Map A



Inset Map B



Inset Map C



Site #	Site Name	Prioritization Score	Site #	Site Name	Prioritization Score
1	Avenue Parking Garage	3.05	13	Parking Lot #25F	3.25
2	Fire Station #1	3.35	14	Parking Lot #25I	3.25
3	Fire Station #2	2.75	15	Parking Lot #25P	3.05
4	Fire Station #3	3.25	16	Parking Lot #29	3.30
5	Oak Park Public Works	3.25	17	Parking Lot #30	2.35
6	Oak Park Village Hall	3.25	18	Parking Lot #31	3.30
7	Parking Lot #1	3.35	19	Parking Lot #33	3.80
8	Parking Lot #3	3.30	20	Parking Lot #36	3.30
9	Parking Lot #7	2.40	21	Parking Lot #55	3.25
10	Parking Lot #15	3.15	22	Parking Lot #68	2.30
11	Parking Lot #24	3.50	23	Parking Lot #103	3.50
12	Parking Lot #25A	3.15	24	Parking Lot #114	3.65
			25	Parking Lot #118	3.45
			26	Central Pumping Station	3.15

Legend

Oak Park Owned Properties

Green Infrastructure Site Scores (Higher Values Indicate Higher Priority)

- 2.30 - 3.05
- 3.05 - 3.15
- 3.15 - 3.25
- 3.25 - 3.35
- 3.35 - 3.80

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (2020 Decennial Census), U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2011-2015), U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line Data, Village of Oak Park, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, ESRI.

Scale: 1:10,000

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

delta institute

3.2 - Green Alley Prioritization Results

Table 2 includes a list of all the block groups where the Village might consider green alley installation (i.e., blocks groups with at least 30% of their total area within the region of known sandy soils) and the final prioritization score for each block group. Blocks with higher total prioritization scores indicate a higher priority for green alley installation. Alleys in the table are ranked from highest prioritization score to lowest score. Delta has also developed a map, shared in *Figure 4*, depicting the green alley prioritization results.

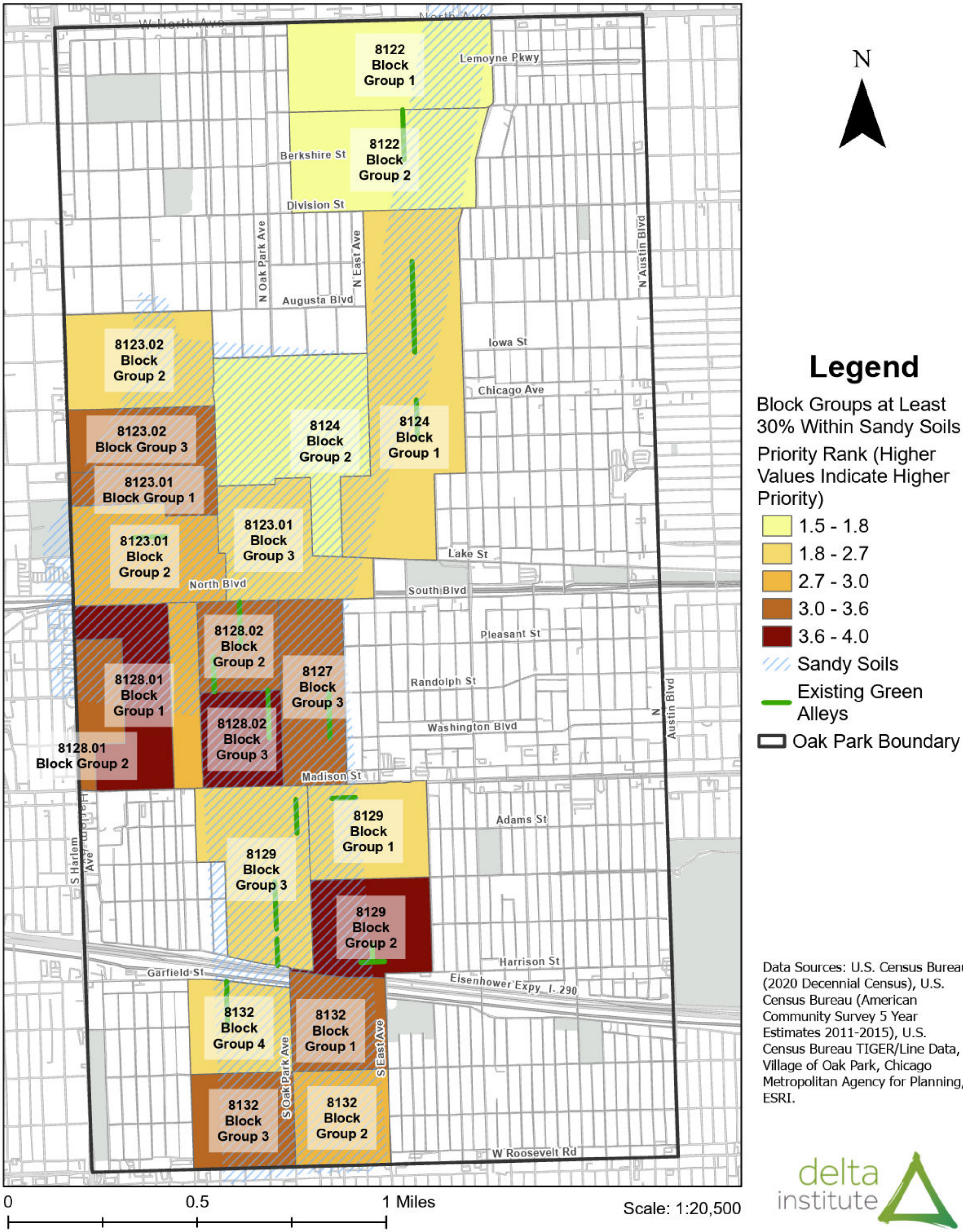
Table 2: Site Prioritization Scores for Green Alleys Within Sandy Soils

Census Tract	Block Group	Prioritization Score
8128.02	Block Group 3	4.0
8128.01	Block Group 1	3.8
8129	Block Group 2	3.7
8128.02	Block Group 2	3.6
8128.01	Block Group 2	3.6
8127	Block Group 3	3.5
8132	Block Group 1	3.5
8123.02	Block Group 3	3.5
8132	Block Group 3	3.4
8123.01	Block Group 1	3.3
8123.01	Block Group 2	3.0
8132	Block Group 2	3.0
8128.02	Block Group 1	3.0
8123.02	Block Group 2	2.7
8123.01	Block Group 3	2.7
8129	Block Group 1	2.7
8132	Block Group 4	2.7
8129	Block Group 3	2.5
8124	Block Group 1	2.4
8122	Block Group 1	1.8
8124	Block Group 2	1.8
8122	Block Group 2	1.5

As discussed in Section 2, once the Village exhausts the list of alleys within the known sandy soils area, the Village may consider expanding the green alleys program to block groups outside the area with known sandy soils. Before doing so, the Village may consider gathering additional data regarding soils in other parts of the Village.

Figure 4 (following page). Map of block groups with at least 30% of their area within the known sandy soil extents. Block groups are color-coded based on the green alley prioritization scores, which indicate the block groups where green alleys may have the most GI impact and best align with Village goals.

Oak Park Green Alley Prioritization Map



Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (2020 Decennial Census), U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates 2011-2015), U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line Data, Village of Oak Park, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, ESRI.

delta institute

4.0 - FUNDING RESOURCES

Delta compiled a list of potential funding resources the Village might use to fund GI project development. These resources are summarized in *Table 3*, which provides the funding program name, administrator, funding type, and link. The table also identifies how relevant a funding program might be to the Village. Delta based this relevance assessment on how eligible and competitive an application from the Village might be and how confident Delta is that the agency overseeing a funding source would renew the resource in subsequent years. Delta has provided additional details about each program in the subsequent sections.

Table 3. Summary of Potential Public Funding Resources for GI Projects

Funding Program Name	Administrator	Funding Type	Relevance	Link
Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants (OSG) Program	US EPA	Grant (Federal)	Medium	EPA OSG
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Grant (Federal)	Program Closed (April 2025)	FEMA BRIC
Water Pollution Control Loan Program (WPCLP)	Illinois EPA (IEPA)	Loan (State / Federal)	Medium	IEPA WPCLP
GI Grant Opportunities (GIGO) Program	IEPA	Grant (State)	High	IEPA GIGO
GI Partnership Program	MWRD	Grant (Local)	High	MWRD GI Partnership

4.1 - Federal Funding Programs

Delta reviewed several federal funding programs and identified two grant programs the Village might consider – US EPA's OSG program and FEMA's BRIC program.

4.1.1 - Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program

The US EPA OSG program provides grants to state governments for sewer overflow reduction and stormwater management projects (see Table 4 below). In 2021 and 2022, Illinois received $1.8 million and $1.1 million, respectively, to allocate to municipal governments for eligible projects. The Village's GI projects would likely be eligible for this program. Congress wrote this program into the Clean Water Act, so EPA has authority to continue administering OSG funding. However, the program is not currently open, and it is not clear if and when EPA will receive additional funding for this program. The Village might track this program as a potential future funding option.

Table 4. US EPA Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant Program Details

Program Element	Program Details	Considerations for the Village
Eligible Applicants	US EPA awards grants to state governments, who are responsible for awarding funding to sub-grantees. Municipalities and municipal entities are eligible sub-grantees.	Village would be eligible to apply as a sub-grantee to the State of Illinois for OSG funding.
Eligible Projects	Eligible projects fall into three categories: (1) combined sewer overflow correction, (2) sanitary sewer overflow correction, and (3) stormwater and subsurface drainage water. Stormwater projects can include various types of GI (green roofs, bioswales, permeable pavement, etc.). Only capital projects (planning, design, and construction) are eligible.	Village GI projects would likely be eligible under the third category of projects (stormwater and subsurface drainage water). However, scoring criteria may change each fiscal year, which may inform which projects are competitive.
Funding	Amount of funding for the program varies each year. Illinois received a $1.02 million allotment in fiscal year (FY) 2024. The program requires a minimum 20% non-federal match.	Village may need to provide at least 20% of non-federal match funding, depending on how Illinois structures the state's grant application. OSG funding is typically competitive.
Application Process	State of Illinois submits a grant application to US EPA, and US EPA determines a grant allocation to each state. For each FY, Illinois determines how the state selects municipal sub-grantees.	Program does not currently have an open application. EPA may release funding for the program in the future. If so, the Village would need assess how Illinois decides to administer the state's sub-grantee selection process.

4.1.2 - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities

The FEMA BRIC program provided grants for mitigation projects that improve community resilience to disasters. Municipalities have pursued BRIC funding in the past for water infrastructure resilience, and previous iterations of the program considered GI projects at the neighborhood and site scale as nature-based solutions for mitigation projects, specifically Flood Risk Reduction projects. Delta referenced the FEMA BRIC program in the first draft of this report, submitted to the Village in March 2025. In April 2025, FEMA announced that the agency was ending the BRIC program.

4.2 - State Funding Programs

Delta reviewed several State of Illinois funding programs and identified two resources the Village might consider – the IEPA WPCLP and IEPA GIGO program.

4.2.1 - Water Pollution Control Loan Program (IEPA)

The IEPA WPCLP is Illinois' Clean Water State Revolving Fund program and offers low-interest loans for wastewater and stormwater projects. The program includes a supplemental incentive, the Green Project Reserve, that may offer partial principal forgiveness for GI projects funded by a WPCLP loan. While the Village's GI projects would be eligible for the program, the Village would need to demonstrate that it has a means to pay back a WPCLP loan, even if the Village receives partial principal forgiveness. The program has capacity to offer large multi-million-dollar loans but involves significant administrative requirements. As a result, this program would not be appropriate for small one-off GI projects. Rather, it would be better suited for a larger GI installation program. Refer to *Table 5* for additional details.

Table 5. IEPA Water Pollution Control Loan Program Details

Program Element	Program Details	Considerations for the Village
Eligible Applicants	Include local units of government and intergovernmental agencies.	The Village would be an eligible applicant.
Eligible Projects	A wide range of gray and green stormwater projects (e.g., green roofs, permeable pavement, bioswales, etc.) are eligible. Program covers project planning, assessment, design, and/or construction costs.	While GI projects would be eligible, the Village would need to review the WPCLP scoring criteria to assess how competitive a project may be. Historically, IEPA has funded fewer stormwater projects than wastewater projects. It may be advisable to submit an application that includes both combined sewer and GI projects.
Funding	The program offers low-interest loans. The interest rate is currently 1.87% (as of March 2025) with a typical loan period of ~20 years or the useful life of the project. IEPA updates the rates each year. GI projects may be eligible for the Green Project Reserve, which offers partial principal forgiveness for a loan.	The Village would need to have a repayment method (e.g., sewer rate) to receive a loan though this program, even if the project is eligible for partial principal forgiveness through the Green Project Reserve.
Application Process	IEPA releases new SRF funding on an annual cycle based on Illinois' fiscal year (FY), which runs July 1 – June 30. The overall application process and timeline follow this annual cycle. Applicants must submit a funding nomination form and project plan, which includes environmental review, by the end of March to be considered for funding in the following fiscal year. If the applicant is approved for funding (announced in the Intended Funding List in July), the applicant must complete the loan application by the end of December.	This program requires significant prior planning. The project plan that must be included with the funding nomination form requires an alternatives analysis, basis of design information, cost estimates, maps, and more.

4.2.2 - Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities Program (IEPA)

The IEPA GIGO program offers grants for designing and constructing GI best management practices (BMPs). This program is likely one of the more relevant and viable funding programs the Village might consider for GI project development. IEPA anticipates the next round of GIGO funding will be made available in Spring 2025. Refer to *Table 6* for additional details.

Table 6. IEPA Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities Program Details

Program Element	Program Details	Considerations for the Village
Eligible Applicants	Funds are available to any Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Pre-Qualified entity that has legal status to accept funds from the State of Illinois. Applicants may include local watershed groups, land conservancies or trusts, public and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions, units of government, and others. Applicants must have the authority and ability to implement the proposed project or propose to subcontract portions of the project to the appropriate entities for implementation.	The Village would be an eligible applicant but would need to verify that the Village is pre-qualified per the GATA requirement.
Eligible Projects	Funds projects to construct green infrastructure BMPs that prevent, eliminate, or reduce water quality impairments by decreasing stormwater runoff into Illinois' rivers, streams, and lakes. Projects include: (1) reconnection of a stream with its floodplain (e.g., two-stage ditch, daylighting); (2) treatment and flow control of stormwater runoff at sites directly upstream or downstream of an impervious area that currently impacts river, stream, or lake water quality through stormwater runoff discharge; and/or (3) treatment and flow control of water generated from impervious surfaces associated with urban development (such as roads and buildings).	GI projects considered by the Village would be eligible projects under the third category. Program documentation specifically identifies bioswales, permeable pavement, green roofs, rain barrels, and others the Village could install as eligible projects.
Funding	Grants range from $75,000 to a maximum award of $2,500,000 per applicant. A minimum 25% match is required. The funding can cover design costs up to $50,000 or 15% of the total GI BMP implementation cost, whichever is less.	The total funding released per cycle is approximately $5,000,000, and applications are expected to be competitive.
Application Process	IEPA releases funding through this program periodically and expects to publish the next Notice of Funding Opportunity in Spring 2025. The notice contains detailed scoring criteria, which include proximity to flooding locations, size of area impacted by flooding, proximity to a surface water body, and several other metrics.	The Village should review the scoring criteria that will be released with the updated Notice of Funding Opportunity before preparing an application.

4.3 - Local Funding Programs

Delta identified one relevant local funding program for GI projects – MWRD's GI Partnership program.

4.3.1 - Green Infrastructure Partnership Program (MWRD)

Because the Village has applied to and received funding through MWRD's GI Partnership Program in the past for green alleys, Delta has not included additional program details in this section.

5.0 - CONCLUSION

This report identifies and lists which Village-owned sites and alleys the Village should prioritize for GI installation based on several criteria that indicate site readiness, potential GI impact, and alignment with Village priorities. Delta recommends reviewing the final lists and maps of prioritized sites in Section 3.0 to determine where the Village might start with expanding the GI program. Village staff might begin initial GI design planning for a single site, or the Village could begin planning a program to install GI at several Village-owned parking lots that received high scores. A program of similar GI development projects could increase project development efficiency. As the Village initiates GI design, the Village can refer to the Design Guide for Green Stormwater Infrastructure Best Management Practices that Delta has provided along with this report. For each site, additional site investigations will be required to determine the most viable GI alternatives, evaluate field soil conditions, identify the most appropriate plantings, and assess other conditions that may impact GI development and performance.

There are several resources the Village can pursue to fund GI project design and construction. Delta recommends that the Village continue to leverage the MWRD GI Partnership program and consider applying for the IEPA GI Grant Opportunities program. The Village also might consider the IEPA Water Pollution Control Loan Program as a financing option for a multi-site GI installation program.

Delta intends for this report to serve as an actionable resource that the Village can use to guide development of GI projects to advance towards the Village's 30% GI goal. To achieve that goal, the Village will likely need to account for the Village-owned sites and green alleys analyzed in this report, as well as projects in the right-of-way, Village parks with enhanced management, and residential GI projects in the Rainscapes program. Delta has documented the site prioritization process in as much detail as possible, such that the Village can replicate the process in the future if criteria change or there are new sites to consider. Please do not hesitate to contact Delta for any future SRF or water infrastructure technical assistance needs.

REFERENCES

Buie, L., McSorely, C., & Nieto, A. (2024). *Creating Composite Indices Using ArcGIS: Best Practices*. ESRI. https://www.esri.com/content/dam/esrisites/en-us/media/technical-papers/creating-composite-indices-using-arcgis.pdf

Dring, B. (2020). *The Continental Divide in Oak Park*. Oak Park River Forest Museum. https://oprfmuseum.org/continental-divide-oak-park

MWH. (2024). *Village of Oak Park Combined Sewer System Master Plan Report*.

Terra Engineering, Ltd. (2015). *Oak Park Green Alleys Program Final Report, Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Financial Assistance Agreement IGIG 1305*. https://ordspub.epa.gov/ords/grts/GRTSADM.download_my_file?p_file=179757&p_page=PROJECT

US Census Bureau. (2020a). *Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What All Data Users Need to Know*. U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, DC. https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/acs/acs_general_handbook_2020_ch12.pdf

US Census Bureau. (2020b). *TENURE BY RACE OF HOUSEHOLDER.* Decennial Census, DEC Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table H10. Retrieved December 2, 2024, from https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDHC2020.H10?q=Owner/Renter%20(Tenure)&g=050XX00US17031$1500000_160XX00US1754885&d=DEC%20Demographic%20and%20Housing%20Characteristics

US Census Bureau. (2024a). *Low to Moderate Income Population by Block Group*. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2015. Retrieved December 2, 2024 from https://hudgis-hud.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/HUD::low-to-moderate-income-population-by-block-group/about

US Census Bureau. (2024b). *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Oak Park village, Illinois*. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/oakparkvillageillinois/PST045224

US EPA Office of Inspector General. (2025). *The EPA Left $20 Million Unawarded in the Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program* (Nos. 25-P-0014). https://www.epaoig.gov/reports/audit/epa-left-20-million-unawarded-sewer-overflow-and-stormwater-reuse-municipal-grants

Village of Oak Park. (2022). *Climate Ready Oak Park*. Sustain Oak Park. https://www.sustainoakpark.com/oak-parks-climate-action

Village of Oak Park. (2024). *Village Board Goals: Priorities, Key Projects, and Initiatives 2024—2025*. https://www.oak-park.us/files/assets/oakpark/v/1/elected-officials/final-_2024-2025_village_board_goals_adopted_jan_23_2024.pdf

Village of Oak Park. (2025). Village of Oak Park Website. https://www.oak-park.us/Home