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School: Joliet Junior College

Day 22 Greenest Challenge

Dear Mayor Bob O'Dekirk and Councilman Larry Hug,

I am writing to you today as a citizen of Joliet in District One, and as an optimist who sees Joliet as a great community, with an even greater opportunity to grow its current and obtain new sustainability initiatives. Living in Joliet for most all of my life, I see the potential Joliet has to not only continue to be the second largest city in Illinois, but to become the most sustainable city in Illinois as well. It is for not only the benefit of the people, but for the benefit of our historically diverse land and its resources-one such resource being the aquifers Joliet uses, which have been estimated to only have about a decade worth of water left.

For one, instead of leaving the open and unused agriculture fields on sale and open for development, Joliet should restore such land, perhaps by creating more community organic garden plots, and/or occupying that space as part of 'Historic Joliet' by doing prairie restoration work to exemplify our historic landscapes and how the prairie has shaped early life in the Midwest.

Second, a water conservation initiative needs to be obtained- as I mentioned earlier, we all know Joliet will soon run out of water very quickly if no conservation acts to sustain our supply are enforced. The City of Joliet website briefly mentions 'encouraging citizens to have rain barrels', but perhaps a stronger initiative should be done to incentivize residents utilizing a rain barrel.

Additionally, I do not believe it is either sustainable nor economically efficient to build the Rock Run mall- a project to build a lifestyle mall at I-80 and I-55. This mall will not only cause the Louis Joliet Mall to run out of business, creating more open and eventually unused, developed land, as the Louis Joliet Mall ran the Jefferson Mall out of business- but will result in more development, contributing to more rain loss, as water will flow into sewage systems versus back into the soil. This Rock Run Mall is also proposing a road to go through Joliet Junior College's natural areas- a precious and biodiverse area which in itself promotes sustainability and habitat restoration.

In close, transforming unused lands, creating better incentives to water conservation, and rejecting more development plans are just a handful of the many ways we can make Joliet more sustainable. I believe Joliet has the means and potential to become the most sustainable city in Illinois, and I would love to follow up and converse more if possible.

Thank you, and have a great day.

Sincerely,

Cami Provencher