



Village of Westchester

MEMORANDUM

TO: Acting Village President and Board of Trustees

FROM: Acting Village Manager Dawn Wucki-Rossbach

DATE: April 18, 2023

SUBJECT: ACCEPT AND FILE THE 2022 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GREEN RESIDENTS OF WESTCHESTER (GROW) ECOLOGICAL COMMISSION

BACKGROUND

At the April 17, 2023 Special Committee of the Whole Meeting, Trustee Slavic introduced to the Board the 2022 Annual Report of the Green Residents of Westchester (GROW) Ecological Commission. GROW is presenting an annual report for 2022; however, will be submitting quarterly reports from this point forward.

Acting President Steker stated that the GROW Commission has completed a great deal of work. He thanked the GROW Commission for all their hard work and appreciated having all of the work reflected in their annual report. There were no questions, so the matter will be referred to the April 25, 2023 Village Board Meeting for acceptance.

The 2022 Annual Report will be posted on the Village's website after the Village Board formally accepts the document at the April 25, 2023 Village Board Meeting.

BUDGET INFORMATION

Budgeted Item (Please circle one): Not Applicable

Budgeted Amount: Not Applicable

Proposed is (Please circle one): Not Applicable

Budget Account Code(s): Not Applicable

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Village Board accept the 2022 Annual Report of the Green Residents of Westchester (GROW) Ecological Commission as presented.

ATTACHMENTS

April 7, 2023 Memorandum regarding the 2022 Annual Report of GROW

2022 Annual Report of the Green Residents of Westchester (GRW) Ecological Commission



Village of Westchester

MEMORANDUM

TO: Acting Village President and Board of Trustees Acting

FROM: Village Manager Dawn Wucki-Rossbach

DATE: April 7, 2023

**SUBJECT: GREEN RESIDENTS OF WESTCHESTER (GROW) ECOLOGICAL COMMISSION
2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

BACKGROUND

The GROW Committee began their work in 2022, since then they have been very active in pursuing their duties identified in the Municipal Code in Section 2.39.110 – Duties. In Section 2.39.100 – Report, the Commission “shall present a written report to the Village President and Board of Trustees regarding the activities of the Commission, and such reports shall be made on a quarterly basis in January, April, July, and October each year.” At this point in time, GROW is submitting an Annual Report for 2022. From this point forward the GROW Commission will be submitting their reports quarterly.

The Chair of the GROW Commission will be at the meeting and available for questions on the report.

BUDGET INFORMATION

Budgeted Item (Please circle one): No cost to generate the report being presented

Budgeted Amount: Not Applicable

Proposed is (Please circle one): Not Applicable

Budget Account Code(s): Not Applicable

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Village Board review the 2022 Annual GROW Report and ask any question they may have on the report.

If there is no additional information that the Board would like to see in the Report, then Staff will place the 2022 Annual GROW Report onto the Village Board Consent Agenda on April 25, 2023 as a review and file item. Once approved, the report will be placed on the Village’s website and Facebook Page.

ATTACHMENTS

2022 Annual Report of the Green Residents of Westchester (GROW) Ecological Commission

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

Our mission is to advise the Village and educate the community about environmental programs and practices to improve the quality of our air, water and land; reduce greenhouse gases; minimize waste; and reduce energy consumption.

RESPONSIBILITIES

We work to be critical partners in neighborhood beautification and ecological decisions made on behalf of the Village.

The Ordinance to create the Green Residents of Westchester (GROW) Ecological Commission states (Section 2.39.110; approved January 25, 2022):

- “[T]he commission shall utilize the 2021 Metropolitan Mayors Caucus’ Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region which includes mitigation and adaptation strategies to create a more sustainable and regenerative community.”
- “The commission shall also prepare, maintain, achieve objectives of, and sustain Westchester’s Climate Action Plan.”

CORE VALUES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stewardship- Sustainability- Transparency- Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Advocacy- Conservation- Innovation- Inclusion
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2022 MEMBERS AND AREAS OF INTEREST

Matt Downs – Waste reduction, ecological restoration, reduction in pesticide usage particularly to lawns

Lee Kaufman – Alternative transportation, energy, landscaping, land use (placemaking), community engagement for change and improvement

LeeAnn Kruszynski – Circular economy/waste reduction, tree canopy, flooding

Nicole Molinaro – Pesticide awareness, pollinator habitat, heat island reduction, greenspace integration and optimization, environmental literacy, ecological restoration, flooding, FEMA Community Rating System

Diane Scott - Legislative, nature awareness

Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase – Clean air, clean energy, Climate Action Plan

Evelyn (Evie) Slavic – Trustee Liaison

GROW IN THE COMMUNITY

To engage the community throughout 2022, GROW initiated and participated in environmentally-focused events. Communication was provided through local Facebook pages, articles submitted to the Village newsletter, and hand-delivered invitations to meetings and events to Village residents. Members of our community may also opt-in to receive notification about upcoming commission meetings and activities. **(To do so, email GROW at: ewchase@westchester-il.org)**

The themes of this year's activities were varied and included:

- Nature Appreciation/Native Plants
- Tree Care and Canopy Restoration
- Alternative Transportation
- Waste Reduction
- Climate Action Plan

The following sections detail GROW's 2022 involvement in each of the above subject areas, beginning with a summary of related outreach and engagement and followed by a narrative providing additional information.

NATURE APPRECIATION/NATIVE PLANTS

Date	Event/Article Title	Organizer/Author
April (Newsletter)	Join the City Native Challenge	Nicole Molinaro
June (Newsletter)	Build a Healthier Garden with Natives	Diane Scott
July (Newsletter)	A Closer Look at Conservation at Home	Lee Kaufman/ Nicole Molinaro

November Leave the Leaves
(Newsletter)

Nicole Molinaro/
LeeAnn Kruszynski

December Village Vehicle Sticker contest

Diane Scott/Evie Slavic

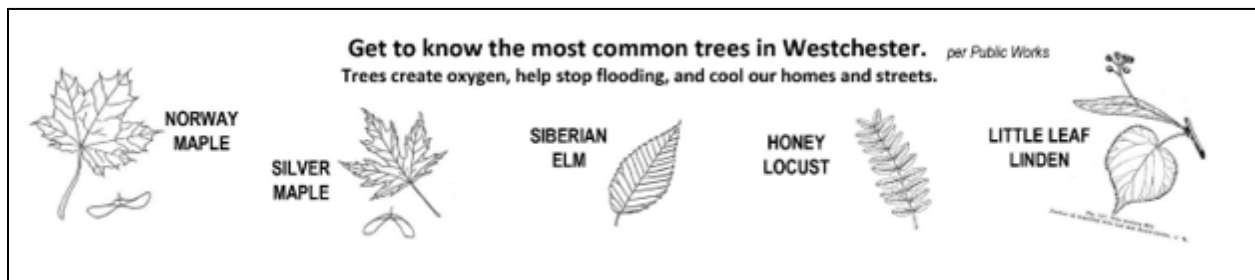
Nature Appreciation

One important role of the GROW Commission is to encourage residents of all ages to appreciate the beauty of the natural world. We also encourage residents to appreciate the wonders in our own backyards, parks, and parkways. Westchester is fortunate to have easy access to high-quality, biodiverse green spaces like the Cook County Forest Preserves and Wolf Road Prairie. Through building an appreciation for the ecosystems in which we live, we hope that residents will increasingly value and protect these assets to our Village life.

We began the year with a focus on building nature awareness in our children.

To celebrate Arbor Day in April, as Public Works planted a Northern Catalpa in the parkway outside of the Westchester Primary School on Fleet Street, acting Village President Nick Steker and GROW member Nicole Molinaro spoke to the entire school about how trees benefit us and how to care for them. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) supplied free trees in containers. The Cook County Forest Preserves District gave free pencils, stickers and brochures highlighting their varied programs and locations. The entire primary school of about 360 students assembled outside on the grass and seemed mesmerized by the planting and mulching!

For the Village 4th of July Parade, GROW members distributed bookmarks with drawings of the leaves of the five most common trees in Westchester. Kids were encouraged to color them, in an effort to teach children the names and properties of nature around them. We hope that in building an awareness of the plant life around them we will help children to build a consciousness that values trees and wider green spaces.



In November and December 2022, the Village and GROW partnered to offer an art contest in local grade schools to design a new vehicle sticker based on the theme, "I have fun outside in nature." We hoped to encourage children to think about the natural world as a welcoming place that they and their families enjoy, build and support. Trustee Evie Slavic partnered with school leaders so that children were encouraged to participate. One prize will be awarded at a Board Meeting in early 2023 for each of the school levels -- primary, intermediate and middle-school --- with one winner's artwork gracing our 2023 vehicle sticker.

In our April Village newsletter, we invited residents of all ages to take part in the City Nature Challenge from April 29 to May 2. Sponsored by iNaturalist, one of the world's most popular nature apps, the event invites participants to share their observations of wild plants and animals in their communities. The annual four-day bioblitz encourages nature lovers in cities around the world to see which city can gather

the most observations of nature, find the most species, and engage the most people in the event, while working collaboratively.

We coordinated with Public Works to advocate for the restoration of the tree canopy and care for newly planted trees, with an article on tree care in the May newsletter. We hoped to educate homeowners and businesses alike to native landscaping alternatives that are better for all of us than choosing green lawns and invasive species. Native plants were also featured in the June, July, and November Village newsletters. as well as speakers on growing native plants in your garden at the library and a native plant sale.

GROW members also shared information regarding the referendum to “Vote Yes” for the Cook County Forest Preserves District on the November 2022 ballot. That referendum proposed a small tax increase that allows the Forest Preserves to continue its work in protecting air, water, and natural habitats, while giving residents of all ages a place to explore nature, be active and healthy. The referendum passed with a rousing 69% of the vote in Cook County, surely a good sign that residents value a lifestyle in harmony with the natural world.

There are many vibrant community resources that can be partners for GROW’s educational and nature awareness programs in the future. We have just begun to establish connections with friends at the Forest Preserve, Wolf Road Prairie, the Grassroots Garden Group, Park District, Westchester Public Library, the schools, the Illinois Extension Service, and within Proviso Township. Going forward, we hope to more fully leverage this talented network for the benefit of Westchester’s residents.

Native Plants/Insect Habitat

Educating the public on the importance and identification of native species and habitats is the first step in establishing their value and need for protection/integration into residents’ home landscapes. In April, GROW published its inaugural article for the



Village newsletter and facilitated its first collaborative event with the Park District. GROW encouraged residents to become citizen scientists and join the City Nature Challenge, which utilizes a popular nature app, iNaturalist, to identify and share nature observations (see previous section). GROW hopes to expand this event in 2023 as it is a four-day bioblitz that happens across the world. Sightings uploaded into the app become data that help scientists, researchers, and land managers better understand and protect nature.



*Independence Day Parade, 2022
Commissioner Diane Scott dressed as a tree
with a message on the importance of our Tree
Canopy keeping us cool on hot days.*

Engagement of our whole community is important and in June GROW followed up with a complementary newsletter article on building a healthier garden with native species. The theme of native species and pollinator habitat continued through the month when the Library unveiled “Prairie Rising”, a native prairie garden embedded on public land. As a Village our greatest ecological asset is the Wolf Road Prairie: an invaluable remnant prairie ecosystem including native plants and much-needed insect habitat. With its installation at the Library, Prairie Rising became an extension of Wolf Road Prairie that the Village can hold up as an example to inspire residents to increase the presence of native plants, creating wildlife corridors and habitats that complement our surrounding natural resources.



GROW’s Conservation@Home newsletter article in June not only highlighted resources for native plantings and habitat, it also discussed the invasive European buckthorn. This fast-growing shrub creates dense thickets and reduces overall soil quality, killing and inhibiting the germination of nearby native plants. Additionally, Commissioner Molinaro made the recommendation to update the Village’s 7.56 Noxious Weeds Ordinance, since a recent amendment to the IL Exotic Weeds Act (SB 3433) empowers a municipality to adopt an ordinance to eradicate all buckthorn within its boundaries, including on private property, with appropriate protocol.

In August, the Library hosted two sessions of a nature photography event that encouraged participants to explore the new on-site native prairie. One GROW member attended one of the sessions alongside other community members and the Grassroots Garden Group.

In September, GROW sponsored a native plant education session at the Library followed by GROW’s first Native Plant Sale, a collaboration with Dave and Holly Peterson of I Love Native Plants. Resident Lynn Baker created the art for the event flier. During the event, more than 300 plants found new homes. GROW looks forward to more educational opportunities and events that focus on native plant species while supporting local plant vendors.



Mulching those newly-planted native species is key to their ability to survive winter temperatures while they are establishing their root systems. “Leave the Leaves,” GROW’s November newsletter article, highlighted the need for turning this humble “trash” into eco gold to provide insulation for newly-planted plants- and much needed overwintering habitats for beneficial insects. Proper leaf mulching around native plants provides the critical habitat for insects to survive a cold winter- and provides a food source for birds and small mammals come springtime.

TREE CARE AND CANOPY RESTORATION

Date	Event/Article Title	Participants/Author
April 23 rd	Municipal Shredding Event, Medication Take-Back, MWRD Trees and Compost	GROW participation
April 29 th	Arbor Day Event and Westchester Primary School	GROW/Nicole Molinaro (Speaker)
May (Newsletter)	The Giving Tree - and How You Can Say "Thanks!"	LeeAnn Kruszynski
July 4 th	July 4 th Parade	GROW

Each year, Westchester's tree canopy provides \$1.8 million in ecosystem services that include carbon storage and sequestration, air pollution removal, and stormwater interception. Not included in these figures are quality of life benefits that include increased property values, better mental and physical health, reduced surface temperatures, increased neighborhood aesthetics, and more. In fact, the tree canopy is the only type of infrastructure that appreciates in value over time.



April 2022 Arbor Day Event

Please see previous sections for a description of GROW's participation in the Village Arbor Day celebration. Late April was also the occasion for an oak seedling and compost distribution offered by MWRD alongside a paper shredding and medication disposal event. Several GROW commissioners participated in the event along with other Village staff and officials.

In early 2022, The Morton Arboretum and the Chicago Region Tree Initiative (CRTI) released a regional [Tree Census](#) report covering the 7-county Chicago Region. This was followed by a [Municipal Canopy Summary](#) report for each of the 285 municipalities within the region. These reports, which are complementary to one another, stress the importance of: eliminating invasive species; maintaining a diverse canopy; and implementing policies/practices/ordinances that support a healthy tree canopy that enhances resident quality of life.

Previous management practices, invasive pests, severe weather, and other factors have reduced Westchester's tree canopy from 30% in 2010 to 26% in 2020. For reference, Cook County's average canopy has remained relatively unchanged at 28%. These findings were discussed at the November and December GROW commission meetings, and Steve Crowley, Interim Public Works Director, was available to discuss the reports and provide context for not only the causes of Westchester's canopy decline, but the tactics and policy changes being implemented to reverse these declines. The Village recognizes that the tree canopy is in need of diligent attention, and is pursuing many strategies to rebuild and maintain a robust and resilient tree canopy. This includes increased focus on species diversity and implementing a goal of planting 200 trees per year over the next 5 years.

GROW and Interim Public Works Director Steve Crowley, who oversees Westchester’s Tree City USA designation, have been in conversation around the assistance available to the Village at no charge through CRTI’s experts and arborists. In Spring 2022, GROW and CRTI provided Public Works with informational door hangers describing proper tree planting and care for residents receiving new parkway trees. This fall, GROW brought to Public Works’ attention a grant program which disburses state funds from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to municipalities pursuing tree inventories, management plans, and tree planting projects. The Village has applied for this financial assistance and \$15,000 was awarded for the completion of a comprehensive tree inventory and management plan for Village-owned trees. The completion of a tree inventory and management plan will enable the Village to more efficiently build and maintain the canopy with an eye to age and species diversity. GROW will continue to monitor available federal and state funding opportunities that may be of benefit to Public Works’ Forestry program and will assist as needed to ensure that Westchester’s canopy continues to provide needed environmental and human health benefits.

In 2023, GROW would like to host a roundtable of public landowners in the Village to ensure that strategies for tree care and planting are aligned with best practices that foster the continued growth and health of our urban forest.

WASTE REDUCTION

Date	Event/Article Title	Organizer/Author
April	MWRD Compost Giveaway	GROW participation
September (Newsletter)	Reusa-Palooza: Less Trash, More Treasure	LeeAnn Kruszynski
September	Reusa-Palooza	LeeAnn Kruszynski/GROW
October (Newsletter)	2022 Pumpkin Smash	Matt Downs
November	Pumpkin Smash and “Learn How to Compost”	GROW/Matt Downs

Aside from promoting GROW and distributing bookmarks, commissioners leveraged the opportunity to participate in the Independence Day Parade to highlight the benefits of reusing festive decor. Over 200 re-used strands of Mardi Gras beads were given away to parade-goers in an effort to extend the life of these items and share a spirit of festive fun with residents.

In September, GROW organized a Village-wide yard sale and giveaway day. The purpose of the event was to divert useful items from landfill. Promotion of the sale included two notices in the Village newsletter, multiple Facebook and Nextdoor posts, door-to-door flier distribution, signage at major intersections on the day of the sale, articles in the Village Free Press, posts on the Village website, and advertisements on local garage sale aggregation websites. Participants signed up via



Google Form and their addresses were added to an event map. Participant questions were fielded through a dedicated event email address. In total, 170 households participated in the inaugural event, with a followup survey indicating that most would like to see it repeated in the future.

For the past 4 years, Westchester joined a growing list of over 60 communities in an effort to divert pumpkins from landfills by providing locations for residents to drop-off jack-o-lanterns to be composted. The Pumpkin Smash is held annually on the Saturday after Halloween and began in Wheaton in 2014. The event has been set up each year behind the Westchester Community Church.



Beyond the environmental benefits, a major reason for participating in the Pumpkin Smash is to highlight and provide education regarding the negative effects of decomposing organic material in landfills and the many benefits of converting such materials into compost which can benefit the community. Decomposition of organic matter, such as pumpkins, produces greenhouse gasses including methane. Globally, landfills are the 3rd largest producers of methane gas, which traps 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide. These emissions can be reduced by composting Halloween pumpkins and other organic matter instead of disposal in landfills. When applied to garden beds and agricultural land, compost reduces and in some cases eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers. It is a nutrient-dense soil amendment which can provide cost savings over conventional soil remediation. Lastly, compost enhances water retention in soils, helping to reduce flooding in our yards and streets.

Given that the Village's existing waste/recycling contract is due to expire in 2024, GROW commissioners were asked to provide feedback on the existing scope of services offered and suggestions on additional/supplementary services the selected hauler could provide to help the Village reduce its landfilled waste. The suggestions included educational events/materials to help residents understand acceptable materials in curbside recycling, right-sized services to incentivize residents to reduce solid waste, and options to compost organic waste, among others.

Moving into 2023, GROW would like to continue to provide educational opportunities to residents on ways in which they can reduce or repurpose waste, and to expand the Pumpkin Smash to a second location in order to make drop-off more convenient for residents and encourage more community involvement. The commission would like to build a committee to take on organization of the Village-wide yard sale, and would like to continue in an advisory capacity to the trustees regarding ways in which the community can improve upon waste management responsibilities.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Date	Event/Article Title	Organizer/Author
July 4 th	July 4 th Parade	GROW participation
October 1 st	Tour de Proviso hosted by Village of Riverside	Westchester Cycle Group/GROW participation



GROW Commissioners showcase active transportation methods during Westchester's 2022 Independence Day parade

One of the most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and chronic respiratory ailments is to decrease the number of combustion vehicles on the road. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, whether through carpooling, leveraging public transportation, or engaging in active transportation modes like walking and cycling. Active transportation pays dividends not only in avoided environmental damage, but in improvements to human health through improved air quality and physical exercise. It is also a low- or no-cost way for residents to take action against certain lifestyle diseases and climate impacts at the same time.

Westchester enjoys easy access to transit; in fact, Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning (CMAP) data show that 95% of residents have at least “moderate” access to public transit. However, alternate transit modes are underutilized as evidenced by the fact that the average Westchester household owns two cars and travels almost 19,000 vehicle miles each year. Since the Village was largely planned/developed in the age of the automobile, safe bicycle access along major thoroughfares is constrained or nonexistent, limiting the convenience and feasibility of short-distance bicycle trips around town. Earlier in 2022, the Village passed a Complete Streets Ordinance, which will help to secure grant funding to make streets more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.

GROW seeks to: draw attention to the assets Westchester currently has available in the realm of alternate transportation; advocate for the integration of more active transit-friendly infrastructure; and promote a culture that prioritizes alternate modes of transportation over private vehicle trips where feasible. In support of these objectives, Commissioner Wiseman-Chase provided information on funding opportunities for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Friendly Transportation from the Active Transportation Alliance and CMAP at the August and September GROW meetings.



GROW Commissioners Nicole Molinaro, Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase, Diane Scott, and Lee Kaufman participated in the 2022 Tour de Proviso in Riverside

The commission discussed the 2014 Comprehensive Plan for Westchester, and the vital role of the overall community in the planning process. The comprehensive planning process includes considerations for transportation and walkability, as well as possibilities to create natural greenspace. The commission has recommended that these factors, as well as developments that will have the greatest impact on the quality of life of residents, be considered in the context of revisions to Westchester’s Comprehensive Plan.

GROW actively participated in weekly Westchester Cycle Group outings from Spring-Fall 2022, as well as the Tour de Proviso On October 1st. This year’s Tour de Proviso highlighted nearby Riverside, while the 2023 bike ride will feature Westchester. Commissioner Lee Kaufmann and Westchester Cycle Group founder, Patricia Mitchell-Braxton, have been asked to assist with the planning of the cycle route through Westchester, and GROW expects to be heavily involved with both the planning and execution of the event. This event represents an opportunity to put additional thought and investment toward active transportation infrastructure as we showcase the best that Westchester has to offer.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Date	Event/Article Title	Organizer/Author
August (Newsletter)	A Look at Solar Energy Incentives	Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase
August 27 th -28 th	GROW Solar Chicagoland presentation by Marina Minic from Citizens Utility Board	Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase (Host/Organizer)/GROW
October (Newsletter)	2022 Pumpkin Smash	Matt Downs
November	Pumpkin Smash and “Learn How to Compost”	Matt Downs (Host/Organizer)/ GROW
December (Newsletter)	Westchester Residents Take Action on Climate Change	Elizabeth Wiseman-chase

Climate Action - Clean Energy: Report and Recommendations

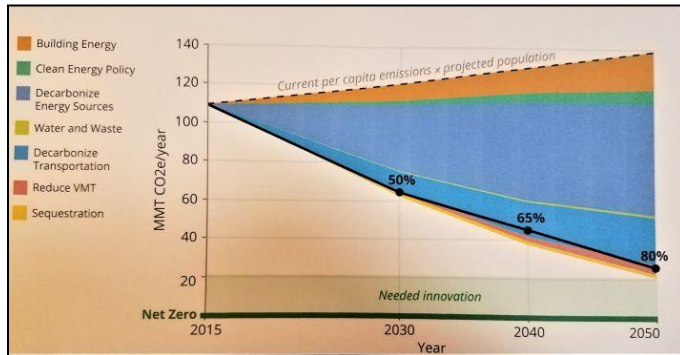


Solar Power Hour

At the June GROW meeting, Commissioner Wiseman-Chase gave a presentation to the commission entitled “Climate Action - Clean Energy: Report and Recommendations.” As part of the presentation, carbon emission reduction goals from the recently enacted state Climate Equity and Jobs Act (CEJA) were shared. The presentation discussed the health consequences of air pollution associated with emissions, updated information on climate change, its

impacts and solutions from the 2022 International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and United Nations

Conference of the Parties (UN COP) reports, financial benefits to the consumer of adopting renewable



Projected changes in accumulated tons of Greenhouse Gas equivalent (GHGe) and contributions from emission sources.

energy solutions, and the expected consequences of not reaching zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In 2015, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) completed a greenhouse gas inventory for the northeastern counties of Illinois. Projected growth in emissions, emission sources, and opportunities to reduce emissions through interventions were included in the report.

Decarbonizing energy sources by closing coal plants and adding clean, renewable solar energy to the electrical grid will have the

greatest impact on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Decarbonization of transportation would have the second greatest impact by increasing the use of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids. Based on the data, Commissioner Wiseman-Chase recommended the following course of action:

- 1) Request a representative of Citizens Utility Board to educate the community about the various state and federal incentives available to add solar panels to their homes and a group buy opportunity being offered through GROW Solar Chicagoland.
- 2) The Village should consider applying for an opportunity for residents to opt in to the Community Solar Clearinghouse Solution CS2 through the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.
- 3) The Village should consider developing a 5-year plan for Fleet Management that examines mitigation of environmental impact and total cost of ownership, rather than capital and operating expenses separately.
- 4) The Village should develop a plan for adequate electric vehicle charging functionality, and eventual re-evaluation of the need for underground fuel storage tanks.
- 5) The Village should incorporate staff input into new vehicle assessments. Prioritizing electric vehicles (EVs) and Plug in Hybrids (PHEVs).

In July, Acting Village President, Nick Steker, joined other local mayors in signing a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively to reduce GHG emissions and other air pollutants in our area by joining the C4 - Cross Community Climate Collaborative.




Join us for a Solar Power Hour!

SATURDAY or SUNDAY, AUGUST 27-28

9:00 - 10:00 A.M.

Westchester Village Hall
10300 W Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL

Co-hosted by
Green Residents of Westchester (GROW)
Ecological Commission





Learn more at:
chicagoland.growsolar.org

At the August GROW meeting, GROW identified a ComEd Grant Opportunity for Municipal Electrification. This grants funding plan would provide a variety of resources to municipalities, including fleet assessment assistance and rebates.

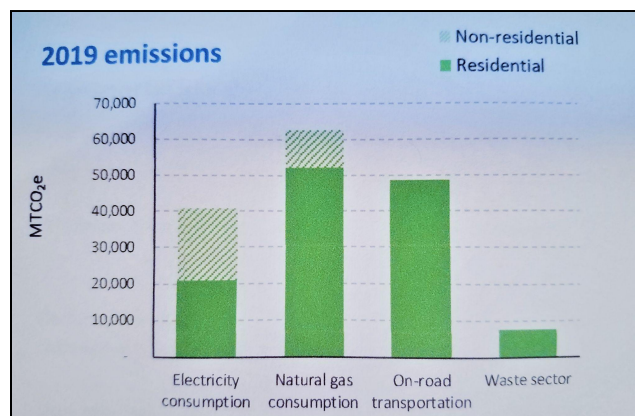
In August, GROW published the newsletter article, "A Look at Solar Energy Incentives," and co-hosted two events with Marina Minic from Citizens Utility Board (CUB) at the Village Hall. Approximately 60 residents attended the sessions.

Westchester's 2019 GHG Emissions Summary Report Findings

In November, Commissioner Wiseman-Chase shared that CMAP had completed a comprehensive study of GHG emissions by source for the Northern Illinois region. The findings indicated that regional greenhouse gas equivalents (GHGe) had decreased by 9% between 2010 and 2019, an average of 1% per year. Annual reductions of 5% per year will be needed to reach the 2050 goal of net zero emissions.

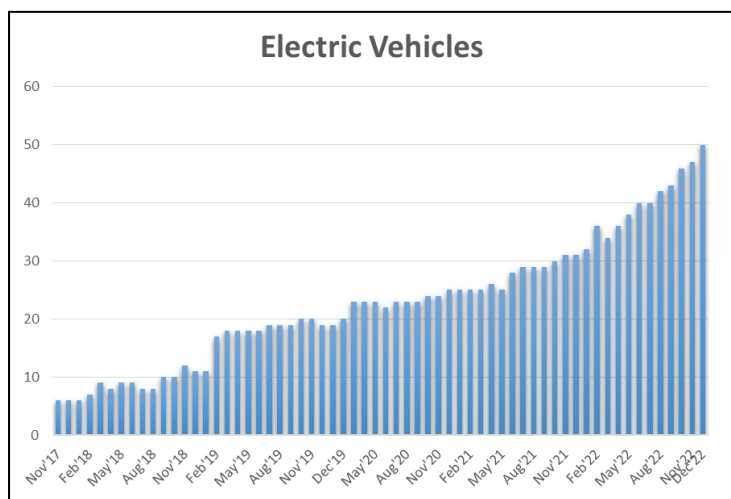
Key findings for Westchester include:

Residential natural gas consumption is the greatest source of GHGe in our community. Our community's utilization of natural gas is significantly higher than the average usage found throughout the CMAP region, Cook, Suburban Cook, DuPage counties, and most of our neighboring suburbs. As a result of these findings, GROW discussed the opportunity to provide information to the community about energy efficiency. GROW has made arrangements with Nicor to come on-site in January 2023 to inform our community about free in-home energy assessments, free and discounted energy savings devices, and incentives/rebates that may be available. It is our objective to save residents unnecessary expense while reducing air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.



2019 Emissions Summary for Westchester

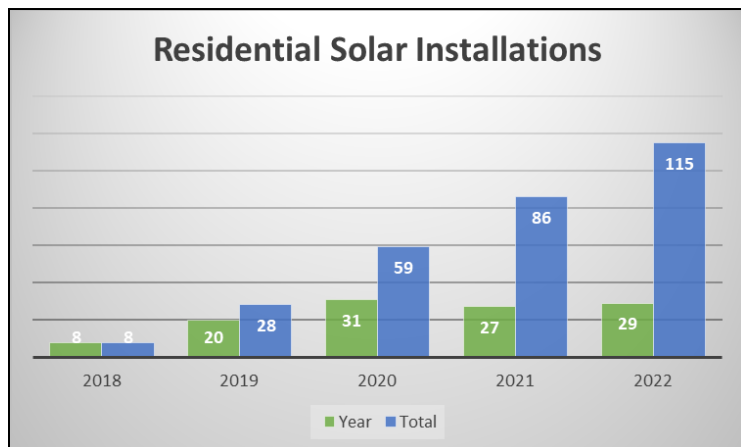
Westchester Residents Take Action on Climate Change



From November 2017 to October 2022, Westchester residents took action on climate change and local air pollution by increasing the number of electric vehicles (EVs) in our community from 6 to 50.

In 2022, Federal and State legislation were passed to provide funding for expanded EV charging capacity in close proximity to interstate roadways and financial incentives for purchasing EVs. Illinois has set a goal of adding 1 million EVs to our roads. Westchester currently

has one public EV charging station, located at the Walgreens at Mannheim and Roosevelt Road. To support the anticipated growth in EV utilization, GROW will work with the Village to help identify ways to expand public charging capacity.



Westchester residents continue to take action on climate change by installing new rooftop solar systems in their homes. As a renewable source of power, solar has an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change. Solar energy can also improve air quality and reduce water use from energy production. With enhanced State and Federal incentives in 2022, we can anticipate continued growth in solar installations and community solar (solar farm)

subscriptions in our Village. GROW will continue to provide information on solar technology and financial incentives for homeowners and renters, regardless of income.

Summary and 2023 Vision

The first year of the GROW Ecological Commission proved to be very productive, with all commissioners leading environmentally-focused events and/or bringing an environmental awareness to events being held by other organizations. Consistent engagement in events and involvement in the Village newsletter helped residents to learn of the commission's existence and purpose. We look forward to continuing to engage residents in 2023 while digging in to help the Village achieve its commitment under the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus Greenest Region Compact, signed in 2014.

2023 Meetings – First Thursdays of each month at 6:30 pm (To be posted to Village Website)

January 12 th	February 2 nd	March 2 nd	April 6 th
May 4 th	June 1 st	July 6 th	August 3 rd
September 7 th	October 5 th	November 2 nd	December 7 th