

**Carbon Neutral** by 2050

**CITIZENS' GREENER EVANSTON**  
2018 Annual Report





May 15, 2019

Dear friends of Citizens' Greener Evanston,

We've come a long way in the last ten years!

In 2008, Evanston's first climate action plan set a greenhouse gas reduction target of 13% and a few dozen CGE members got to work advocating, educating, organizing and convening. A decade later we have well over 2,500 members and we've helped lower our community's carbon footprint by more than 25%. Now we've set our sights even higher: zero carbon and zero waste by 2050!

Those are the bold goals of Evanston's Climate Action and Resilience Plan which was unanimously approved by the city council at the end of 2018. The plan was drafted by CGE's Vice President Lauren Marquez-Viso and longtime CGE member Joel Freeman, who led a team of fifteen other Evanston residents appointed by the mayor which worked closely with city staff to chart a course towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

This year saw several additions to CGE's growing roster of programs. We welcomed Go Evanston, a dynamic group working to make Evanston's transportation systems more amenable for walking, biking and transit. The innovative Waste Not Evanston group works to reduce consumption and promote recycling and composting. And the engaging Watershed Collective focuses on our most valuable local natural resource.

As usual, we've managed to do all this work on a shoestring budget thanks to the time and energy of our board members and many other volunteers. Streets Alive brought in a few thousand dollars again in 2018 as did an Edible Evanston campaign enabled by a generous matching gift. Imagine what we could do with an even more robust budget!

That will be only one of challenges CGE faces as we work to make Evanston more environmentally just, sustainable and resilient not only for the next ten years but all the way to zero carbon, zero waste by 2050.

We look forward to working with you—let's get to it!

*Jonathan*

Jonathan Nieuwsma  
President

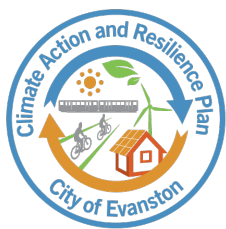
## CGE ADVOCACY—WORKING TO MAKE OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT MORE SUSTAINABLE

### **Evanston's New Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP): Zero Carbon, Zero Waste by 2050!**

The big news in 2018 was the approval of this third iteration of an Evanston Climate Action Plan. Building on our success with the first Climate Action Plan from 2008 and the Livability Plan of 2014, CGE was a prime mover in raising the bar further. Mayor Hagerty appointed CGE Vice President Lauren Marquez-Viso and CGE Energy Committee member Joel Freeman to lead a 17-member working group that drafted the plan, which was unanimously approved by the city council in December.

The 2018 plan is the first to specifically address resilience in addition to greenhouse gas mitigation—as much as we lower our local carbon footprint, we'll still have to adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change. Also new in CARP is an explicit commitment to equity, which aligns well with CGE's environmental justice work.

More good news: it's not just CGE shouldering the burden this time around! CGE carried the water for the 2008 and 2014 plans and headed up the 2018 process but the task force which drafted the latest plan included several new names and fresh faces. There's always more room on the sustainability bandwagon!



### **Ensuring Sustainability Staff and the City of Evanston**

In a fiscal environment of tightening purse strings due to shortfalls in projected revenue, the City of Evanston underwent a participatory and “priority based” budgeting process lasting several months. Of the 152 programs under consideration for cutbacks, a full 66 had at least some impact on environmental justice, sustainability or resilience. CGE made sure that sustainability had a voice at the table by meeting with aldermen and participating in the budgeting process. We encouraged our members to weigh in on a community survey with our recommended Top 10 list. While it would have been nice to increase the headcount in the City's sustainability department, we're happy that the position of Sustainability Coordinator remains fully funded.

## **GROWING OUR ORGANIZATION: THREE NEW PROGRAMS ADDED THIS YEAR**

### **Go Evanston Joins the CGE Team**

With 17% of our greenhouse gas emissions coming from transportation and mobility, getting more Evanston residents to walk, cycle or take transit is an important part of our mission. In the spring of 2018, we were delighted to welcome Go Evanston to the CGE umbrella. Go Evanston, which started independently in 2017, is a volunteer citizens group that pursues Evanston-based transportation advocacy. Go Evanston wants people to walk and bike more and drive less--it's better for our health, our community, and our environment. Go Evanston wants cars to go slower, children to be able to safely walk/bike to school and older adults and individuals with disabilities to be able to easily and safely get around. Go Evanston wants it to be easy to get anywhere in Evanston without using a car.

To achieve these goals our Go Evanston program continues to advocate for protected bike lanes and adequate transit service. They teamed up with the YMCA to conduct a bike rodeo with summer campers during some nice warm weather, and later in the year during the frigid polar vortex they joined the mayor on a ride to the annual holiday tree lighting.



### **Making It Official with Watershed Collective**

After several years of independent outreach and advocacy, Evanston activist and educator Clare Tallon-Ruen joined the CGE board and in 2018 we made it official by incorporating her Watershed Collective as our new committee for water and related issues. Watershed Collective's goals:

- Protect our watershed and aquatic ecosystem.
- Keep our drinking water safe and public.
- Promote infrastructure investments that mitigate pollution and urban flooding.
- Provide educational opportunities for Evanston residents to expand their awareness of Lake Michigan.
- Promote water conservation practices.

To promote these objectives, the Watershed Collective hosted a series of adult education events at the Arrington Lagoon building near Clark Street Beach. Topics included a study of waves and currents in Lake Michigan, watershed spirituality, a history of the Illinois lakeshore, and pharmaceutical and microplastics contamination.

### **A Homegrown Program: Waste Not Evanston**

Another new CGE program we added this year, this one developed and led by board member Bea Echeverria, focuses on minimizing waste in our community. The main goal of Waste Not Evanston is to

support local residents, business and institutions in understanding and implementing the 5 R's hierarchy:

- REFUSE what you don't need
- REDUCE what you do need
- REUSE what you have and by repurposing, repairing, sharing, and buying second hand.
- RECYCLE what you can't Refuse, Reduce or Reuse
- ROT (COMPOST) inedible food scraps

Among the accomplishments in Waste Not Evanston's first year were a successful collaboration with the District 65 Green Team to help them implement composting programs at Evanston grade schools and a series of repair clinics.



## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

### **EDIBLE EVANSTON: INSPIRING AND SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION**

#### **Growing Gardens, Growing Gardeners**

Edible Evanston continued to provide opportunities for Evanstonians to expand their knowledge of nutrition, growing food, composting, and to experience the benefits of home-grown produce for themselves. Educational workshops and work & learn days at the Food Forest provided many opportunities to learn about urban agriculture and gardening. The annual Seed Swap (and free seed give-away) was held in conjunction with the Evanston Community Gardener lottery in March. A wonderfully successful fundraiser at the end of the year will allow Edible Evanston to expand activities in 2019. Thanks to all who volunteered their time during the year and contributed to the fundraiser!

#### **Food Sharing initiatives**

2018 was a good year for squash, tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers, but what do you do if you find yourself with more produce than you can use? Edible Evanston volunteers will pick up excess produce from local growers and deliver it to our neighbors in need. Since 2012 Edible Evanston has delivered thousands of pounds of fresh local vegetables and herbs to Evanston food pantries each year. Delivery was expanded in 2018 to three local food pantries.

#### **Eggleston Anniversary Food Forest**

The Eggleston Park Food Forest and Orchard is a diverse planting of perennial edible trees, shrubs, and small plants – including fruits, vegetables, nuts and herbs – designed to mimic the natural balance of a forest by utilizing permaculture principles. The multi-layered Food Forest, from dwarf fruit trees to on-ground mushrooms, demonstrates how Evanston residents can grow their own healthy food and become more food resilient.

Started by a group of Northwestern University students in 2013, in its fifth year the Food Forest started to bear real fruit. An extensive expansion in 2018 added many additional berry bushes and low-ground edibles. Edible Evanston engages community volunteers to maintain its portion of the ECO Acre in the City's Eggleston Park. Volunteers in 2018 included faith organizations, Boy Scouts and University groups as well as interested individuals. The family-oriented Annual Fall Festival in October was a great success, and this year the weather cooperated!



Food sharing delivery to the Food Pantry   Building a raised bed garden



Annual Seed Swap



Work and Learn demonstration at the Food Forest

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EVANSTON (EJE)**

### **Waste Transfer Station Monitoring**

Members of the EJE committee have continued to work with city staff and aldermen to implement an environmental monitoring initiative to determine if any adverse environmental conditions exist near the Church Street Waste Transfer Station (WTS) in Evanston. The project was delayed in the first half of 2018 due to a city budgeting issue, but in November the City of Evanston issued an RFP to select a vendor to provide environmental monitoring products and services for the project. If a qualified firm is awarded the business early in 2019, and if no new financial obstacles are encountered in the coming year, EJE hopes to make solid progress on the initiative with its project partners in 2019.

### **Environmental Justice Ordinance**

In 2018, EJE renewed its effort to create an environmental justice ordinance. A new draft of the ordinance was created with input from city staff, including Dr. Pat Efiom, the city's Chief Equity Officer, who reviewed the draft from an equity perspective. EJE will be focused on moving this ordinance forward so that it can ultimately be voted on by the city council.

### **EJE in the Community**

In September 2018, EJE once again staffed a booth at Streets Alive to continue its outreach to the Evanston community and introduce event attendees to environmental justice. The EJE booth experienced healthy traffic during the event and numerous people signed up to receive additional information on what the EJE committee is doing in Evanston.

## **NATURAL HABITAT EVANSTON**

### **Edging Closer to Community Wildlife Habitat Certification**

Under the encouragement and leadership of Natural Habitat Evanston, we've completed all the education, outreach, seed giveaways and restoration required to achieve community certification. As a result, Evanston is 92% of the way to finishing its Community Habitat Certification. We just need to certify more homes and other gardens. An additional 49 properties were certified as National Wildlife Federation Habitat in 2018, including 30 homes, 14 city parks, two schools, two businesses and a religious institution. Only about 25 more to go!

### **Isabella Woods: Safe for Now**

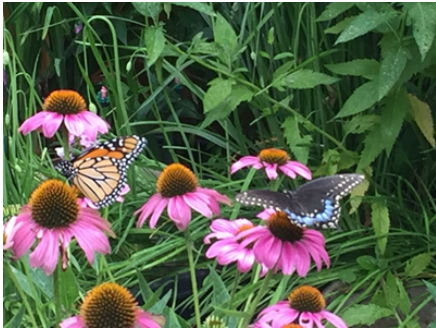
Owing partly to Natural Habitat Evanston's community organizing, Evanston's old growth oak trees at Isabella Woods are safe from roads for now, but the fight continues. In 2018 the push for a road moved to other public land in Wilmette. Even though it's Wilmette, we were in the fight with our neighbors. The property owners successfully pushed for public land to be taken from Canal Shores Golf Course and used for a road to increase the value of their private property. MWRD approved the request for the road in November 2018, saying that it was a 'ministerial' request and it couldn't refuse the request from the county highway department.

### **Rejecting Pesticides**

Together with Go Green Oak Park and the ETHS Green Team, CGE's Natural Habitat Evanston hosted a well-attended lecture at ETHS about Round-Up (glyphosate) in our food and its impacts on human health. Dr. Thierry Vrain, retired soil biologist and genetic engineer at the Canadian Department of Agriculture, was the featured speaker and Dr. Susan Buchanan, Director of the Great Lakes Center for Children's Environmental Health, moderated the discussion.



Alderman Robin Simmons in her NWF certified garden.



Monarch and Black Swallowtail in a member's certified yard (credit Nancy Bradt).



## ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

### **Streets Alive!**

The second Sunday in September was once again the day for a successful Streets Alive! Along with the Evanston Environmental Association as a co-sponsor and the City of Evanston as event coordinator, we shut down Main Street and welcomed thousands of our friends and neighbors as they got out of their cars and off of their couches and out into the street for a community celebration of active and sustainable living.



Streets Alive Photos by Genie Lemieux/Evanston Photographic Studios Inc. and George Pfoertner

### **Green Drinks**

To engage the Evanston community on highly relevant sustainability topics, this program hosted educational discussions throughout the year, which also allowed for networking. Topics during 2018 included an introduction to the City's Climate Action Plan, how to make Evanston a zero waste city, and a detailed look at recycling.

## WE'RE STILL WORKING ON THAT CARBON FOOTPRINT

### **Aggregation Participation Up**

While many communities have dropped their community electricity aggregation programs over the last few years, here in Evanston we're still going strong—2018 was our seventh year with 100% renewable energy for participating residents. We're in the middle of a three-year contract so we had the year off from advocating for aggregation at the city council; instead we focused on increasing participation. Thanks to improved language in the current contract, new Evanston electric customers are brought into the program several times a year rather than only at the beginning of the term, and participation rates are close to 75%.

### **Celebrating Sanctuary: A CGE Program for Houses of Worship**

Recalling CGE's origins in the Evanston Interfaith Action movement, we went back to our roots in the second year of the Evanston energy and water use benchmarking ordinance. Former CGE board member Michael Drennan, owner of Fides et Ratio Consulting, ran our Celebrate Sanctuary program, graciously providing pro bono consulting services to a number of Evanston places of worship, helping them get a handle on their energy and water use and get set up in the Energy Star Portfolio Manager system.

Solar Panels at  
Hemenway  
Methodist Church

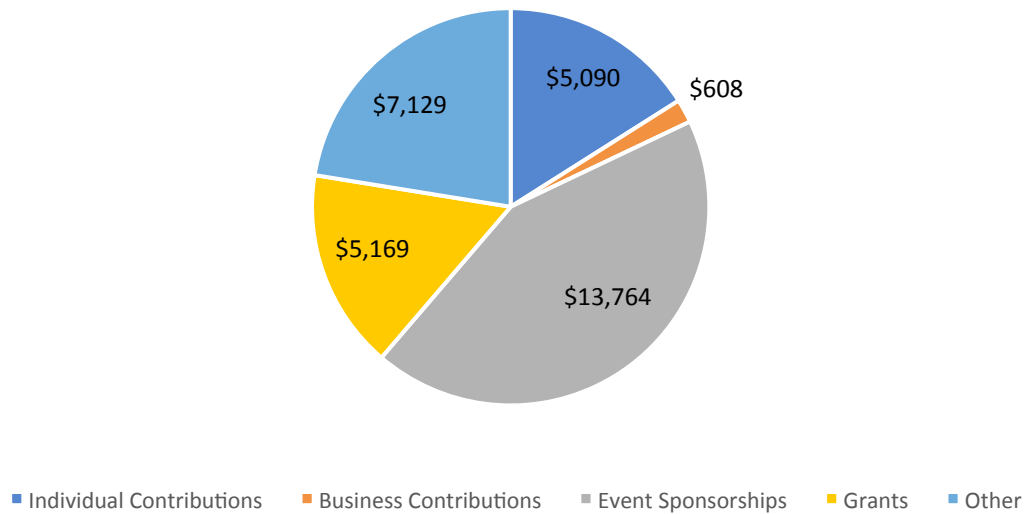


Ron Cox and Faye  
Eisenberg review  
electric usage  
records at Lake  
Street Church prior  
to uploading into  
Portfolio Manager.

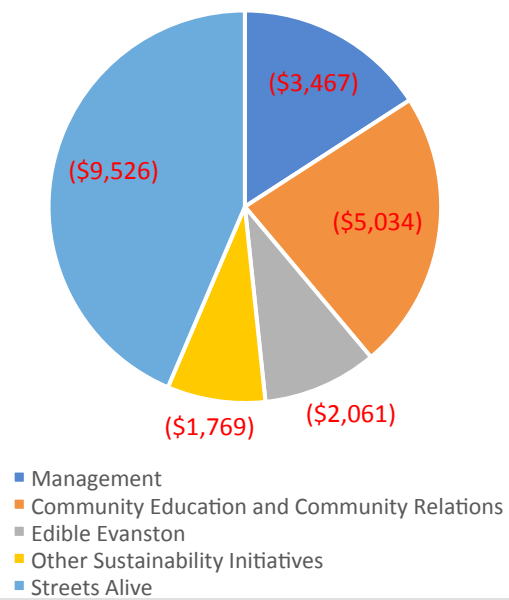


## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**FY 2018 Revenue**



**FY 2018 Expenses**



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

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Bronze

- AMLI Evanston
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- Greenwise Organic Lawncare
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