

Environmental Questions for Candidates

Approved in 2018, the Evanston Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) identifies actions our City must take to meaningfully address climate change. The following questions relate to the various elements of CARP and align with the actions featured in the plan. Citizens' Greener Evanston appreciates your participation. Your responses will be shared with the community in advance of the election.

Evanston Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP)

<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showdocument?id=45170>

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Select your Ward *

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1. What are the top 3 things you have you done in your personal life to reduce your own, or your family's environmental impact? *

Educating my children as to these issues and concerns is at the top. Public education is woefully deficient in this regard and the next generations have to understand issues, develop critical thinking and understand the problems we face.

Within my family, I have developed a culture of caring for what you have, repairing instead of replacing. I make a point of instilling that in the household and have repaired countless items, from toys and clothes, to appliances, our cars and our home itself. Our consumer culture does harm on an unprecedented level. We need to change that.

In addition, I try instill the overall concept of reducing use of pretty much everything. Energy, products, food, clothing. Using the recycling cart, driving less and turning off faucets sooner will not get us where we need to be. Every little bit helps, but we need a worldwide culture shift. And sometimes that starts in the neighborhoods, but it certainly starts with education and understanding.

2. List 1-4 steps you would take to help implement the CARP plan incorporating key City departments and decision-making processes. *

We need to look beyond the Implementation and Accountability points in the plan. I have been frustrated by a lack of willingness to push for stronger personal accountability for the community and for businesses. For example, some residents refuse to place their recycling into the carts properly (putting it in tied bags, etc.). I had suggested penalties for repeat violations, without success. This is the kind of thing that literally costs a resident nothing in order to comply, but the failure to comply has a cost to maintaining the operation of the recycling infrastructure.

The local businesses should be part of a community-wide conversation on where day-to-day operations have a negative impact. Big box stores that add aftermarket packaging for security reasons, cashiers who use far more bags than necessary, inefficient heating and cooling systems in large buildings. The list is as long as you can keep writing. But having a problem solving group who are engaged with the businesses can bring these things forward, and our talented staff can work with them to implement changes, help find grant opportunities, and, when it makes sense, change the rules to allow for creative solutions.

Members of our City staff should be assigned to these working groups, depending on their areas of experience and expertise. I would want them to report to the Council regularly so we can track progress and get feedback on what may be needed as far as policy, rule-making or financial support.

3. What are your top environmental or climate priorities for the City? *

Education, because that drives everything else, and if we fail to adequately educate, it will ensure our ultimate failure. In Europe, and other parts of the world, everyone on a block follows the rules. There is no reason we can't collaborate and cooperate to the same, or better, degree,

Our lakefront is under attack. We need to take steps to stabilize the shoreline on a long-term basis, while being mindful of the fact that water levels and storm surges will continue to get worse over time.

We have made significant progress with regard to storm water runoff infiltrating our sewer system. We need to continue with those efforts on a code compliance level, and engineering level.

We work hard to preserve our trees, our water supply and our physical environment, but we need to be mindful about the things we can't see. Things like eliminating the use of herbicides and insecticides. Loss of our pollinator populations is already a crisis. We have taken steps to reverse that in our community but we need to do much more.

4. The City just passed an Environmental Justice Resolution. What steps should be taken to ensure that Environmental Justice (EJ) is incorporated into City Code and that all City staff is trained to identify and tackle EJ issues? *

Environmental Justice Resolution (Click Link) - <https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=59213>

This ideal should be incorporated as part of our City's efforts to include equity in all acts and actions by the City. When issues are considered, an equity lens must be used to consider the environmental impact of a given decision. We also need to revisit existing codes and policies which result in inequitable outcomes. For example, the City adopted a policy to provide loans for residents to replace lead water service lines for which the residents are responsible. This was a policy I supported, and the staff has reported back that there has not been a high level of participation. The staff is proposing changes to that program and I proposed including certain sewer service repairs be included. Our staff is making notable progress in identifying such issues and concerns and they need to be supported with an willingness to adopt policy to address the issues they are identifying.

5. Building energy consumption is the greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Evanston. Assertive action and meaningful behavior change to address building energy consumption are needed to mitigate the gravest impacts of the climate crisis. Would you endorse: *

	Yes	No	Maybe
Updating the building code to require LEED Gold Certification or higher on new construction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Updating the building code to improve overall building energy efficiency beyond the minimum requirements of the State of Illinois Energy Conservation Code?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. List 1-3 of your ideas to engage and educate the public so that Evanstonians have the knowledge and resources to address the climate crisis. *

Some of this is already happening. Members of the Arts community have been included in educational opportunities. We have chosen art works for public display which highlight environmental issues. I want to do much more of that kind of thing to bring the issues to people in a way that is engaging and enlightening. Opening someone's eyes to something they have not noticed will be more effective than a threat to punish. We need to have a stronger marketing effort to promote the simple but relevant things we already do. From pumpkin composting to holiday light recycling. There are ways to makes these things fun and interesting and our staff has been clever in coming up with ideas. We need to promote that better.

7. List 1-3 of your ideas to ensure that our most vulnerable residents are prepared for the challenges of climate change such as extreme heat, flooding, etc. and that they know where to get support when facing such challenges. *

Outreach is always a top priority. E-mail and Facebook are not everyone's main source of information. We need to be more present, more deeply in the community. We need to engage more closely with our community partners, faith based organizations and schools to ensure that we are reaching those who need to be made aware of resources.

Housing security is an immediate concern, and will remain a concern indefinitely. The impacts of climate change of a disproportionate impact on such individuals.

I would like to see our community have a permanent shelter facility to meet the interim needs of those experiencing housing and food insecurity.

8. Would you endorse: *

	Yes	No	Maybe
A pathway to free beach access for all?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An affordable pathway to lead pipe replacement?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. How would you advance green infrastructure in Evanston? *

Info: <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure>

We have made great strides in stormwater management. Changes in our codes, and incorporation of stormwater management systems in major projects like the Robert Crown Community Center are great first steps. I want to work with our engineering team and private enterprise to develop programs and infrastructure to utilize water that is redirected in these efforts. Work to find uses beyond safely redirecting the water back into the ground, instead of into sewers.

We also need to take steps to adjust the rules that limit solar panels on homes and create undue hardship for certain residents who are not able to get energy efficient windows and materials into their homes because they are limited by preservation standards that I believe are outdated.

If there is an opportunity to expose the earth and eliminate pavement coverage, we should be taking it. If there is an opportunity to promote plants that support pollinators and bird, if there is an opportunity to plant trees or flowers, we should be taking that opportunity.

Permitting and promoting private developments to create green roofs and renewable energy should also be a priority.

10. Reducing food waste is a top climate solution. The USDA estimates that 30-40% of food is wasted in the US, while as many as 14% of Evanston residents may be food insecure. List 1-3 ideas to ensure all people in Evanston have enough healthy food to eat. *

The USDA estimates that 30 - 40% of food is wasted in the US. <https://www.usda.gov/foodwaste/faqs> 14% of Evanston residents may be food insecure. <https://icma.org/articles/article/evanston-il-producemobile-continues-provide-fresh-fruits-and-vegetables-community>

Years ago, Interfaith Action of Evanston came to the City with the Producemobile idea, a wonderful concept that I enthusiastically supported to be run from the Robert Crown Community Center in the 4th Ward. You cannot underestimate the value of providing healthy, nutritious food to those experiencing food insecurity. We must to more of that.

I would also like to get the community gardens revitalized and expanded. I would like to revisit the idea of having such a gardening option at Gray Park for the residents at Albany Care.

Programs to redistribute unused food are important on many levels, but providing options for fresh produce, some of which can be grown in our community, is a priority for me.

11. List 1-3 ideas to combat food waste in Evanston, including at schools. *

The consumer culture that plagues our society carries over to food. While popular culture (movies like "Supersize Me") has drawn attention to the nutritional impacts of the over consumption and poor distribution of food, not as much attention has been paid to the environmental impacts. On one level, our expectations should be better managed. When every effort is made to ensure that every single flavor of yogurt is available at any given moment, we are guaranteeing that there will be significant waste. We need to adjust our expectations.

Developing additional effective means of distribution of unused food is important, but the fact that we bring in too much can't be disregarded. Sometimes we are too quick to feel good when a solution is apparent at the end of that supply chain, but everyone might be better served if the supply chain were a bit different.

12. Would you endorse: *

	Yes	No	Maybe
A path to ban all single-use plastics, including shopping bags?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Expanding bulk shopping options at stores?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. How would you support a circular economy in Evanston? *

Info: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept>

Some of my answers above touch on that idea. Growing food in the community, repairing goods and products instead of replacing them, and eliminating unnecessary items (aftermarket packaging, bags, etc.) when possible. We are, on the whole a community that has a significant amount of wealth and resources, but that wealth and those resources are not available to everyone. On the whole, the community consumes and disposes of heavily, but falls short on producing or retaining material within the community. I would like to see Evanston develop more small businesses who produce food and products, and to identify businesses that will seek material sources for those products from materials that would otherwise be waste material. Adidas does this with certain products. You can return the products to be recycled and that is used in "new" shoes and apparel. Apple does this to some extent with a recycling program. This concept is not limited to massive corporations and there is no reason that Evanston could not support business concepts that will embrace this model.

14. List 1-3 ideas you have to advance climate-friendly transportation and mobility in Evanston, either through project investments or big picture changes to urban development planning. *

I'll start by saying that I want to do more of what I have been doing, with the support of some of my colleagues on the Council and hard working staff. We have some excellent bicycle infrastructure that I have been personally involved with. We will have more of that if I have an opportunity to keep doing this work. We will also have more transit-oriented housing that does not displace existing residents and that does not cause gentrification. We will have a continued trend away from the automobile based streetscape. Ridge Avenue's intersections will be redesigned, and Main Street will have a new streetscape. People will be able to get from one place to another, more safely, without a car, and they will have more fun doing so.

I am also a strong supporter (and user) of public transportation and will continue to collaborate with Union Pacific, METRA, PACE and the CTA. And when necessary, I also show up to advocate on behalf of Evanston residents to ensure our service and rates are equitable and fair.

15. Would you endorse: *

Yes

No

Maybe

Preserving large native trees on private land?

More info -

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1635842,00.html>



Requiring bird-friendly construction on new buildings and renovations, like Chicago and New York City? More info -

<https://studiogang.com/publication/Chicago-tribune-safer-migration-chicago-birds>



Leaving leaves to decompose on city properties, rather than hauling them? More info - <https://awaytogarden.com/fall-cleanup-with-ecology-in-mind-with-doug-tallamy/>



Expanding the city ban on gas, propane and electric leaf blowers? More info -

https://library.municode.com/il/evanston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT9PUSA_CH5GEOF_9-5-20NOPR

and

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/109428.html>



Additional Comments

Plans and goals are awesome. But we need to be taking action. Every day. Big steps and little steps. We also need to steer away from things like renewable energy credits to get to a point where we are actually using solar and wind to create our energy.

In my years on the Council, there have been times where there was a desire to do something, but a lack of willingness to take a step that was perceived to be difficult. I am optimistic that as our community is seeing things with greater clarity, this will shift. I have been grateful for support over the years from groups like CGE. When I needed people to show up for bike lanes, they showed up. When I needed people to show up to keep bike lanes from being removed, they showed up. When LEED standards were under consideration, they showed up. When people show up, they deserve results and action. Not promises. I want action.

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