



## *Reducing Westchester's Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

**Elizabeth Wiseman-Chase - GROW Commissioner**

If you're interested in taking action on climate change, here is a discussion of the leading sources of greenhouse gas emissions that are produced in Westchester and options you may consider.

Last year, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) provided a municipal emissions summary for the Village of Westchester. The report revealed that residential natural gas utilization is our greatest source of emissions, followed by transportation, and then by electricity usage. They noted that we will need to reduce our emissions by 5% per year to meet the climate mitigation goals set by CMAP and other advisory agencies and organizations.

### ***Reduce Energy Usage – Especially Natural Gas***

Natural gas is comprised of 87 – 98% methane. Methane has 84 times the warming effect of carbon pollution during the first 20 years after its release into the atmosphere, and 28 times the warming effect over 100 years. Our gas furnaces, hot water heaters, fireplaces, dryers, and stoves utilize natural gas. Alternatives to natural gas are available for each of these, and there are incentives available for those wishing to replace these items.

In January, GROW hosted two Nicor energy efficiency events which provided information on how to schedule a free in-home energy efficiency assessment, and how to receive free water savings and home weatherization kits, as well as information on insulating and sealing our homes. Attendees were also provided with information on available cost-savings incentives for reducing heating/cooling loss and replacing our appliances.

### ***Utilize Alternative Modes of Transportation***

Our personal vehicles are the primary source of transportation emissions in Westchester, with most of us driving alone in our vehicles. Finding ways to reduce the number of miles we drive alone, such as

bundling errands, carpooling, taking public transportation, walking or biking are available and help to save on fuel costs and wear and tear on our vehicles. Hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs) are low and zero emissions options.

**From Nov.'17 to June'23 Westchester residents took action on climate change and local air pollution by increasing the number of EVs in our community from 6 to 56.**

After the record heat and hazy, polluted air we experienced during the last week of June, GROW featured walking, cycling, and electric vehicles during the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. The parade featured a Mustang Mach-E, a Tesla Model Y, and a Volkswagen e-Golf. GROW was followed by the Westchester Cycle Group, demonstrating how cycling can be an enjoyable transportation option.

### ***Green the (Electrical) Grid with Solar***

At this time of rising energy costs, you may have given some thought to placing solar panels on your home or business. Costs of solar panels have come down, and this year there are incentives that can reduce your total cost by as much as 70%. Incentives that would apply regardless of the vendor you select are: 1) State Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) - can cover 30% - 40% of cost, 2) 30% Federal Tax Credit, 3) Utility Metering credits (help you pay back your system faster), and 4) The *Illinois Solar for All* program for income eligible households.

**From Jan'18 through June'23, Westchester residents took action on climate change by installing 128 new rooftop solar systems on their homes.**

This is also the fourth year that a group purchasing program, *Solar Switch Chicagoland* is being offered by the partnership of non-profit organizations: Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and Citizens Utility Board (CUB). What is new this year, is that multiple installers have been vetted and selected by MREA to competitively bid on installations. Participants may then opt to go solar through the program, or may utilize the information provided to prepare for negotiating a purchase on their own.

Please join GROW on **Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00am in the Westchester Village Hall Boardroom** as Marina Minic of CUB will be there to discuss the benefits of going solar, solar basics, incentives available, and the options of leasing vs. owning, community solar, *Illinois Solar for All* and the *Solar Switch Chicagoland* group buy program. For information email [ewchase@westchester-il.gov](mailto:ewchase@westchester-il.gov)

# solar switch chicagoland

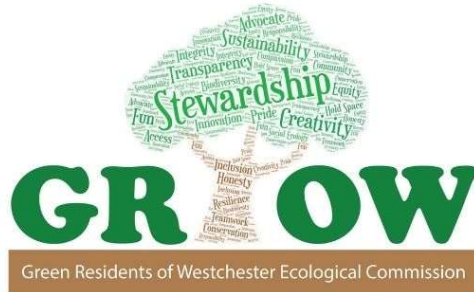
THINKING ABOUT GOING **SOLAR**?

Join us for a free Solar Power Hour presentation to learn how this program makes going solar more accessible and affordable.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 19**

9 - 10 a.m. Westchester Village Hall (Boardroom)  
10300 Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL

Co-Hosted by:



READY TO **LEARN MORE?**

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