

Village of Ardsley CEAC 2021 - 2022 Annual Progress Report

June 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022

The following annual progress report, summarizes the activities and progress of the Ardsley Climate Advisory Committee (CAC) for the period of June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022.

The Village of Ardsley established the Conservation and Environmental Advisory Committee by resolution of the Village of Ardsley Board of Trustees on July 1, 2019. During the 2021/2022 year the committee name was changed to the Climate Advisory Committee.

The Climate Advisory Committee is committed to leaving a sustainable and livable planet to our children and the many generations to follow them. In partnership with the Village of Ardsley we have created an ambitious program to reduce Ardsley's emissions 50% by 2030.

- The **Ardsley CAN by 2030!** initiative (www.ardsleycan.org) focuses on three pillars: Carbon Reduction, Acting Sustainably, and Neighbor by Neighbor change and collaboration. The CAC sponsors education, volunteer, and policy initiatives to achieve the 2030 goal.
- The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway (www.ardsleypollinatorpathway.org) is part of the Act Sustainably pillar of **Ardsley CAN by 2030!** The goal of global pollinator pathways is to create waystations in our yards to support our endangered pollinators as well as all creatures (including us), by restoring healthy ecosystems.

CAC members continue to receive generous support of mentors in partner organizations including local Intervillage CACs in the 'Rivertowns', journalists at *The Enterprise*, various climate scientists and policy experts, County organizations including as FCWC, NYSACC, Sustainable Westchester, and the County Office for Energy Conservation and Sustainability. Board liaisons now work with CAC/Ardsley CAN and the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway.

The 2021/22 CAC budget was reviewed and the 2022/23 budget was submitted within the Village timeline. Meeting agendas and minutes (for October, December, February, April and June) were provided to the Village in a timely fashion.

Climate Advisory Committee 2021/2022

Eda Kapsis, Chair / volunteer / steering committee

Luke Inoue, student member / AHS ETF student liaison

Lorraine Kuhn, member / Stormwater Manager, Village of Ardsley

Dave Lew, member / volunteer / steering committee

Carol Sommerfield, member / volunteer / Chair, Pollinator Pathway / steering committee

Glenn Weinberg, member / volunteer

Asha Bencosme, Trustee Liaison CAC/ArdsleyCAN

Steve Edelstein, Trustee Liaison, Ardsley Pollinator Pathway

Preliminary goals adopted for the committee 2021/22 year as per [recommendations made in 3Q2021](#) :

Encourage establishing a sustainability framework for all decisions, given the accelerated rate of climate change.

Suggestions:

- mitigation of emissions & adaptation for climate events, to protect life & property
- conservation & expansion of natural systems that protect us
- cost-benefit analysis: potential long-term economic cost outweighs current economic benefits. Reverse as well, recognize that long-term economic opportunities may outweigh upfront costs.

Outcomes 2021/2022

1. CAC steering committee members volunteer to form the Village of Ardsley Climate Smart Communities (CSC) & Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Task Force:

Clean Energy Communities:

The CAC developed a partnership with the Town of Greenburgh and Sustainable Westchester to lead a NYSERDA-approved Clean Heating and Cooling Community Campaign from February 1 - June 1, 2022.

See Scoping documents approved by the SW and HVRC.

Through webinars, information was provided on the the adoption of clean heating and cooling technologies (e.g., ground- and air- source heat pump systems and heat pump water heaters) as well as energy efficiency retrofits to homes, businesses, and community institutions. Over the campaign period, 9 permits were issued for air source heat & cooling pumps and 2 permits were issued for geothermal pumps.

Documentation demonstrating completion of the campaign as well as the number of permits issued was submitted to NYSERDA. The campaign was successful in meeting the required installations and the Village will receive a \$5,000 award.

Climate Smart Communities: The CSC Taskforce, in close partnership with the Village of Ardsley, submitted their application for Bronze certification in July, 2021. In September, 2021 Ardsley was awarded the Bronze Certification. Twenty-one actions were completed, documented, and uploaded for an anticipated 162 points, providing a cushion for the required Bronze certification minimum of 120 points. The committee continues to explore opportunities for Ardsley to progress to Silver certification.

2. ArdsleyCAN

C, Carbon Reduction:

Education:

A communication campaign was initiated to send a postcard to new residents in the

Ardsley School District with a link to a new resident [information page on the website](#). Information and links about clean heating/cooling, energy efficient appliances, rebate and tax incentives, the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway, and the offer of free garden consultations was the focus on the new resident information.

Online Resources:

- New educational webpages and content were added to the ArdsleyCAN website. New content includes: [Environmental Social Injustice](#), [waste reduction](#), [recycling guidance](#), [moving to zero waste](#), [preventing reusable items from entering the waste stream](#), and a new resident guide to energy efficient heating, cooling and appliances. Links to information about rebates and tax breaks can also be found on the website.
- A CAC Facebook page was created in the spring of 2021. Ardsley CAN also began to use MailChimp to reach Ardsley CAN's 250 subscribers.

Measurement:

- The CAC started measurement of scope 1 & 2 community-wide greenhouse gas emissions for the baseline year of 2019. Scope 1 represents direct emissions from a building or equipment. Scope 2 represents indirect emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling. Scope 3 is not included as it encompasses other indirect or embodied emissions, (e.g. goods purchased, disposal of waste etc.) that the CAC believes it has limited ability to influence. The sectors that the CAC believes it has the most opportunity to educate and provide guidance to the Village on are buildings, transportation and waste. Eda Kapsis and Dave Lew from the CAC met with Village Manager, Joe Cerretani, and Head of DPW, Dave DiGregorio to review opportunities to reduce village-wide emissions. Opportunities were identified in the waste sector and will be explored together in upcoming months. Challenges remain given the GIS and related boundaries defined for key data sets. Guided by Drawdown.org and related frameworks, the CAC continues to focus on ensuring that the value of measurement and feasibility of the target outcomes are both considered.

Community Choice Aggregation

- Volatility in the energy markets created substantial challenges for CCAs across the state and more broadly. Sustainable Westchester worked with county municipalities to secure new bids. The CAC supported the Ardsley community and advised the Board in various ways to maintain this important program which accounts for the most significant commitment to reduction of emissions for the Village. Please see the Board minutes for CCA milestones during the period covered by this report. .

A, Act Sustainably

Going GREEN in Ardsley

A new pilot electronic newsletter communication campaign was initiated in

September that combined the messages of GREEN Growing and GREEN Living. [Going GREEN in Ardsley](#) focused on easy ways for residents to reduce their carbon footprint and prepare for climate change. After a six month evaluation it was determined that the impact of the newsletter did not justify the resources required to produce it, and so it was suspended.

Ardsley Natural Resources Inventory (NRI):

During the summer of 2021 research into the creation of Natural Resources Inventories was performed with best practice examples identified. NRIs are resource intensive and require specialized expertise for some areas of the inventory. The CAC analyzed whether they could successfully undertake the project as part-time volunteers and realized their resources and expertise were too constrained. The CAC recommended to the Village of Ardsley that an NRI would be useful as Ardsley considers rezoning the Village Business district. The CAC also recommended that a professional firm be hired to develop and complete the NRI. The recommendation was accepted, and an RFP was issued in 1Q22.

The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Project:

The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway team grew in 2022, a key objective of the project. The current members of the steering committee are: Linda Azif, Rebecca Arkin, Kathy Evers, Julie Larkin, Jen Nordhem, Dina Patterson and Carol Sommerfield (chair). The steering committee is focusing on four key areas: Creating Habitat, Outreach and Education, Partnership, and Policy.

1. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:

- The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway distribution list grew substantially since the inception of the project in March of 2021. It now exceeds 215 interested people.
- [Custom developed educational programs](#) were offered to residents via Zoom, including:
 - Native Grasses and Sedges for the Garden (October, 2021)
 - Collecting and Germinating Native Seeds for your garden (November, 2021)
 - Birdscaping in Your Garden (January, 2022)
 - Birdscaping – Easy Naïve Perennials to Attract Birds (February, 2022)
- In support of the Neighbor-by-Neighbor pillar of Ardsley CAN by 2030! two in-person events were produced in 2021 and 2022 and were very well attended:
 - The first annual seed exchange and social event (December, 2021)
 - The second annual Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Open Gardens event with the addition of our first annual plant swap during the event (June, 2022).
- Monthly Pollinator Pathway Get togethers via Zoom were held from September through February to bring the Ardsley pollinator pathway community together.

- A Monthly Pollinator Pathway Newsletter, [The Ardsley Cross Pollination Newsletter](#), was produced monthly for the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway distribution list and for the readers of Ardsley Connects.
- Sixty-four in-depth garden consultations and reports were completed since March of 2021, with 30 performed in the 2021/2022 fiscal year. A focus on identifying and tips for managing invasive plants in people's yards was an additional focus this year.
- Veggie Gardening Mania Initiative:
 - An initiative to promote organic vegetable gardening, Veggie Gardening Mania, kicked off on March 21, 2022 with an in-person education and demonstration event at the Ardsley Community Center. It was followed by a second in-person event in mid-May. The Veggie Gardening Mania steering committee was also created (Ruchi Agarwal, Linda Caldwell, Carol Sommerfield). There has been strong interest in vegetable and herb gardening in the community.
 - A new [vegetable gardening section](#) of the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway website was created, and a Facebook page was launched.

CREATING HABITAT:

- The number of [listed pollinator gardens](#) grew to 31 in little over a year.
- Two grants were applied for and received in 2021/2022 from the Bronx River/Sound Shore Audubon Chapter to help fund the Greenburgh and Ardsley pollinator gardens.
- Mayor Kaboolian signed the [Mayor's Monarch Pledge](#) in April, 2022, committing Ardsley to take actions in support of Monarch butterflies between April 2022 and April 2023.
- As part of [Earth Day activities](#) three pollinator gardens were installed in Ardsley and on Ardsley's borders in Greenburgh: The Ardsley Library Park Pollinator Garden; The AFV Park Pollinator Garden and The Hart's Brook Preserve Harmony Pollinator Garden. All three projects took a year of design, preparation, and coordination to bring to fruition. There was a robust community response to plant and to maintain the gardens.
- Two invasive plant management events were held. One event (February) was an invasive vine cutting along the South County Trailway in partnership with the Hastings and Dobbs Ferry Pollinator Pathways. The second was spearheaded by Mayor Nancy Kaboolian, in partnership with Westchester County Parks, and was focused on invasive vine removal at Macy Park.
- The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway and Woodlands Temple are in discussion about creation of a pollinator garden, as well as a vegetable garden, on the Temple grounds.
- Three in-depth, step-by-step [mailbox garden guides](#), including designs and plant/materials lists, for creating pollinator habitat for sunny and shady sites were created and rolled out in May. The team has approached a local nursery to encourage them to stock the plants in the designs.

PARTNERSHIP:

- The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway partnered with the Ardsley Garden Club, the Ardsley Library, The Ardsley Scouts, and Ardsley Village on the creation and installation of the Ardsley Library Pollinator Gardens.
- Ardsley Pollinator Pathway took the lead to create and chair a [monthly meeting](#) to share ideas amongst leaders in the Pollinator Pathway and Ecosystem movement in Westchester and Connecticut.
- Ardsley Pollinator Pathway partnered with Healthy Yards to produce a well attended program on deer management in Westchester.
- Along with Healthy Yards the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway met with Westchester County to explore ways that Westchester County can capture and communicate best practices in the Westchester County Pollinator Pathway organizations.
- The Greenburgh Pollinator garden projects were a collaboration between the Tarrytown Pollinator Pathway, the Town of Greenburgh Parks and Recreation, and the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway.
- The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway, along with the Westchester Pollinator Pathway, produce and facilitate a quarterly meeting of all pollinator pathways in Westchester to share information on initiatives, best practices, and ways to collaborate to accelerate change.

POLICY:

- The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway, with the full support of the Board of Trustees, signed a petition imploring NYS to restrict the use of Neonic pesticides and support the Birds and Bees Protection Act.
- No landscape or pollinator policies for the Village of Ardsley were championed during the fiscal year.

N: Neighbor by Neighbor

- In addition to the various events already mentioned, Ardsley CAN and the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway participated in the Village of Ardsley 125th Anniversary Celebration at Pascone Park in October, 2021.
- On January 13, 2022 the CAC virtually screened [The Sacrifice Zone](#), a 30-minute film on the social & environmental injustices in the Ironbound neighborhood of Newark, NJ, one of the most toxic communities in the country. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with environmental and social advocates to learn more about the impacts of our waste as well as discover solutions to reduce the burden on local communities. The screening was well-attended with participation across the county and into NJ. Ardsley CAN partnered with the Ardsley MDIC and the AHS ETF. Student comments in the Q&A were among the highlights featured in an article in The Enterprise.

3. Challenges Encountered.

Over the past year we have identified a few challenges and risks.

1. The greatest challenge and risk for the CAC are resources, both financial and human.

Many of the initiatives to support the Comprehensive Plan and **Ardasley CAN by 2030!** require funding and this resource is constrained. NYSERDA grants help to fund future initiatives.

Constrained human resources is another issue. The current part-time volunteer core team has worked diligently on creating a wave of progress during the inaugural years of **Ardasley Can by 2030!**. The CAC core team was reduced from four to three working members in 2021/2022. This has and will continue to impede operational progress. As with other volunteer organizations, it is difficult to find consistent recruits who can dedicate the time and effort required for CAC initiatives.

2. The second challenge is driving engagement with the Ardsley community. The pandemic restrictions made community engagement difficult. As Covid restrictions were lifted in 2022 people again became busy, making it difficult to get their attention. The climate crisis is not observed to be a high priority for most people as they tackle day-to-day demands of growing families, rising inflation, and other issues that take priority in their lives.

4. Next Steps

The CAC will plan in July and August 2022 to set goals for 2022/2023. We know that there will be required actions as well as new opportunities. Goals will be aligned to the **Ardasley CAN by 2030!** initiative as well as the Ardsley Comprehensive Plan. A report of the 2022/2023 goals will be supplied to the Mayor and Village Manager during 3Q22.

Respectfully, Steering Committee:

Eda Kapsis, CAC Chair, CSC/CEC Taskforce

Dave Lew, CAC, CSC/CEC Taskforce

Carol Sommerfield, CAC, CSC/CEC Taskforce, Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Chair

Committee Members:

Lorraine Kuhn, Stormwater Manager, Village of Ardsley

Glenn Weinberg, volunteer

Luke Inoue (Student Member)

CAC Trustee Liaison: Asha Bencosme, Ardsley Village Trustee, CSC/CEC Taskforce Coordinator

Ardasley Pollinator Pathway Trustee Liaison: Steve Edelstein, Ardsley Village Trustee