



Lakeshore Eco-Network

# Make the Planet Great Again!

News from Lakeshore Eco-Network

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## LEN Wants You!



Recently the LEN Board approved a draft strategic plan, developed by the consultant Rosalind Chang hired as a result of our Community Support Recovery Fund grant (thanks, Canada!). “LEN has been around since 2015 and we’ve done some good things,” says co-chair Max Morden. “But we know there’s more we can and should be doing in the face of the worsening climate crisis and biodiversity loss. This plan is a first step.”

Here are some highlights from the plan:

- Vision: A region where biodiversity flourishes and net carbon emissions are reduced to zero
- Mission: LEN raises awareness about issues of biodiversity loss and the climate crisis, and advocates for effective action. We work primarily in the municipalities of Lambton Shores, South Huron, and Bluewater.
- Some of our key goals and objectives:
  - Raise awareness of biodiversity loss and the climate crisis in our area through education and advocacy
  - Provide an opportunity for members and other local residents to meaningfully engage in environmental issues
  - Achieve charitable status in the next 18 months
  - Build partnerships with like-minded organizations
  - Develop a calendar of diverse events and activities
  - Develop four committees: Connecting to Nature, Promoting Active Transportation, Local Climate Action, and Local Government Policy

- Advocate for local action on climate change and biodiversity loss at local governments in our region

The four new committees are now recruiting members – people with bright ideas and lots of energy to address environmental challenges in our region. ***To learn more and get involved, connect with one or more of the contacts below:***

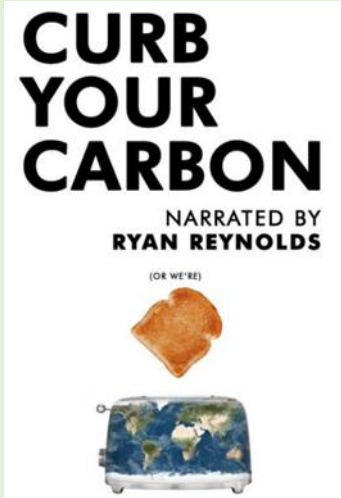
Connecting to Nature- Janet Kurasz, [janetk519@gmail.com](mailto:janetk519@gmail.com)

Active transportation – Carolyn Young, [carolyn.2young@gmail.com](mailto:carolyn.2young@gmail.com)

Local Government Policy- James Corcoran, [atreegrower@gmail.com](mailto:atreegrower@gmail.com)

Local Climate Change- Pat Morden, [patmorden@hay.net](mailto:patmorden@hay.net)

## Native Plants, Ryan Reynolds, and Crunchy Crickets: LEN this fall



LEN's fall native tree and plant sale on September 30 was well attended and lots of great stock was on hand for the eager shoppers. Thanks to our vendors, Heavenly Earth, Auxsable Forestry, Hoonaadia Tree Nursery, Lakewood Garden Centre and Landscaping, and to our partner, Friends of Pinery Park.

The centrepiece of the LEN Annual General Meeting on October 18 was the film Curb your Carbon, narrated by Ryan Reynolds with his usual wry humor. Attendees had a chance to taste flavored crickets (there are lots left if you're feeling peckish!) and chat about future directions.

LEN is planning several events to bring our community together in 2024 – stay tuned.

## Paving Paradise: Why Grand Old Trees are Making Way for a Parking Lot



A small and rare park in downtown Grand Bend, Eilber Street Parkette, will be even smaller (and much less shady) after Lambton Shores Council decided to sell off a 16-meter strip to the developer planning to re-develop 50 Main Street. The decision will result in the destruction of all the trees on the site.

A presentation from the developer said the revised plan would make deliveries and garbage collection easier, make the parkette more useable and safer, ensure “more eyes on” the parkette, and “unlock development opportunity for permanent residents.” Councillor Dave Maguire, who moved acceptance of the 14-metre proposal, explained, “It was a gentlemen’s agreement long in the past that was not carried forward.” He added that the purchaser has offered to improve the parkette,

making it safer and more friendly and planting four new trees.

LEN co-chair and professional forester James Corcoran sees the issue differently. “The increase to 14 metres means that perfectly healthy approximately 200-year-old trees will be removed and replaced with cloned saplings that will never achieve the grandeur of these native trees.” He says the trees measure approximately 60 cm in diameter at 4.5 ft. above ground level, putting them in a category of “significant natural heritage.”

The developer has indicated that he will be building residential units as part of the redevelopment but has yet to submit a draft site plan. Corcoran acknowledges that the request for access via a widened lane makes sense, but he doesn’t see the additional space for parking as necessary, given that underground or ground level parking are also options. He concedes that leveling the parkette will make it more accessible for people who use wheelchairs but says that could have been achieved without removing the trees. “This is really the only green spot of land within two or three blocks, and most

of the lots are fully developed-- I think the neighborhood will miss the trees.”

For the planned parkette improvements, the developer will receive a credit toward the purchase price of the land of more than \$100,000.

Corcoran says it’s a widespread practice to add the value of mature trees to the valuation of land, using a formula. Corcoran estimates that the municipality, and by extension the people of Lambton Shores, should be compensated at least \$120,000 for the trees that will be lost, in addition to the value of the land.

Asked if a municipal tree protection bylaw, something suggested by Councillor Maguire himself in the past, would have altered this process, Corcoran said he thought such a bylaw would apply equally to public and private lands. “I constantly hear concerns from citizens about the ongoing uncontrolled destruction of mature trees in the community for buildings and parking lots,” he says. “In my view, Lambton Shores Council’s support for selling the Eilber Street Parkette for a private parking lot demonstrates that they are not listening to the citizens.”

## Update: A new twist in the Tridon story



The new development planned for the east side of Highway 21 on the old Oakwood driving range and golf course—usually referred to as the Tridon development -- has been controversial from the start.

Local neighbourhoods, including Oakwood Park, Grand Cove, and others, argued strenuously against it, noting that South Huron’s Official Plan did not call for residential development in the area, that it would result in a loss of trees and other natural heritage, and that part of the land appears to be flood prone. In 2021, LEN wrote a letter expressing concerns about the future of trees and

wetlands on the property.

Among local landowners there was also concern that the development would re-ignite the once heated debate about sewer connection on the west side of Highway 21. Installation of sewers would require 30-foot road allowances in the narrow lanes and heavily treed lakeshore communities. Letters were written, funds were collected, and an appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal was prepared.

Then the Ontario government passed Bill 23 in 2022, limiting the ability of conservation authorities, citizens, and even municipalities to influence development decisions. The groups opposing Tridon dropped their appeal, Phase One of the project was approved, and last spring site preparation work began.

From the beginning, the developer and the municipality indicated that there was enough sewer capacity to serve Phase One of the development from the Oakwood Links pumping station. Recently, though, the municipality revealed a proposal with Tridon to forego the Oakwood links pumping station and lay a new sewer pipe that would service both approved Phase One and the not yet approved Phase Two. The Municipality then proposes to “oversize” the sewer pipe to support future developments in the Port Blake area. The cost would be split, with Tridon paying roughly \$1.84 million, and the municipality, and by extension its ratepayers, paying \$600,000 for the oversizing.

Dave Ross, President of the Oakwood Park Association, was dumfounded. “In Ontario development pays for development,” he said in a recent presentation to South Huron council. “But South Huron proposes to install a sewer pipe for a development that has sufficient sewer capacity and for a not-yet-approved development, and to oversize the pipe although we are unable to identify any potential users.”

Ross says the existing lakeshore communities don’t want sewers. In 2010, groundwater testing along the shoreline showed no significant environmental impact from the existing septic systems. Residents of the forested communities worry that sewer installation would mean the loss of many trees. “One of our biggest concerns is that putting in sewer lines would destroy the ecosystem we are trying to preserve,” Ross says. He is also concerned about the municipality approving the second phase of the development in a flood-prone area at a time when climate change promises to increase precipitation. The land north of Grand Bend to Port Blake is prime farmland, floodplain, and forested lakeshore communities.

On March 19, South Huron Council agreed to delay the decision until the next Committee of the Whole, giving time to gather more information about the need for oversizing. “Our battle is not with Tridon,” says Ross. “It’s with South Huron and its mishandling of the development proposal. They need to get a new Official Plan done as soon as possible with public input.”

### Cool (Well, Hot Actually) Climate Info Resources



Interested in authoritative sources for the potential local impact of the climate crisis, and what we can do about it locally?

The [Canadian Climate Atlas](#) is a remarkable interactive resource that enables you to see the impacts of climate change at a micro level, based on a variety of different scenarios and time frames.

with significant climate change, the number of days above 30 degrees centigrade in Grand Bend will increase from the average of 13 in the period 1976-2005 to 32 in the period 2021 to 2050.

[Drawdown.org](#) is all about solutions to the climate crisis and provides information on the global impact of various strategies. For example, the Atlas tells us that onshore wind turbines could save up to 144 gigatons of CO2 by 2050. Again, it’s interactive, so interesting to explore on your own.

## Yes, Municipalities *Can* Make a Difference



We often think about the climate crisis as something that must be solved on a national and international level. But the fact is, municipalities across Canada have been developing innovative climate-friendly policies for many years.

The Partners for Climate Protection Program (PCP) is funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Local Governments for Sustainability Canada. PCP has been enabling local governments to think about innovative strategies and providing resources and models for 25 years. There are now more than 500 municipal members representing 70% of the population of Canada. ([Click here to learn more.](#))

Here are some examples of PCP-supported climate-friendly innovation:

- The town of The Blue Mountains, Ontario, hosts an annual community sustainability summit and releases an annual report card on sustainability.
- St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador is developing a food waste and resource flow map to identify opportunities to minimize food waste.

- Barrie Ontario is promoting the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste through green development standards and plans to develop a zero emissions neighbourhood.
- Leduc, Alberta is developing a policy that will require new developments to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia is developing a community solar garden on a subscription/investment

model.

- Glasgow, Nova Scotia is allocating 50% of revenue from parking meters and parking and idling tickets to its municipal sustainability fund.
- Rimouski, Quebec created a taxibus (on demand) public transportation system.
- Stratford, Ontario has a Pay-as-you-throw solid waste system.
- Ucluelet, British Columbia introduced "density bonusing" to incentivize sustainable development.

So, local action *can* fight climate change. What is your municipality doing? What innovative ideas do you have for effective climate action in your community? Let us know at [patmorden@hay.net](mailto:patmorden@hay.net) and we'll take them forward to our municipalities.

**Please share this newsletter with anyone you think would be interested.**