

## Taking Action

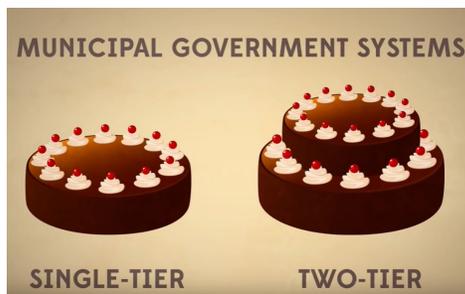
Canadians, including young people, can take action on climate change on a personal level by reducing their carbon footprint, but we cannot stop there. We can also take action by demanding and supporting climate action from our political and business leaders.

The World Bank argues that “building cities that are green, inclusive, and sustainable should be the foundation of any local and national climate change agenda”. The same applies to municipalities of all sizes, urban and rural.

Many people think there’s a dichotomy: that it’s either the environment and carbon reduction or the economy. There is a third way, and that’s bringing those two together and growing a green economy and liveable communities where people want to live and businesses want to invest.

## Municipal Structure

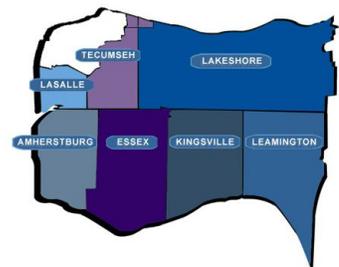
- The municipality is the third-level of governance in Canada behind the Federal (Trudeau) and Provincial (Ford) governments.
- Mayor/Warden: Elected Head of a municipal council
- Councillor: local elected representatives for your area (known as a “ward”).
- Municipalities are structured as single tier municipalities, or as multi-tier municipalities, with upper and lower tiers. There are [444 municipalities in Ontario](#). Of these, 154 are single tier, 260 are lower tier, and 30 are upper tier.
- Single tier: eg. Windsor.
- Upper/lower tier: eg. County of Essex - Essex contains 7 municipalities: Amherstburg, Kingsville, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Leamington, Tecumseh and the administrative seat, Essex.



## UPPER TIER

ESSEX

## LOWER TIERS



## Responsibilities of Municipalities

- Water, fire protection, policing, parks, community centres, libraries, garbage, recycling, land use planning, roads & sidewalks, public transit, active transit (eg cycling paths) and more.
- Most responsible for day-to-day concerns
- The responsibilities of Ontario municipalities are given to them by the province under legislation like the [Municipal Act](#) and the [Planning Act](#).
- Along with almost 500 other Canadian municipalities, the City of Windsor, the County of Essex, the town of Amherstburg and the municipality of Chatham-Kent have all declared climate emergencies (we now have a framework to hold our councillors accountable!)

## Participation in Municipal Decision-making

- Delegations - sign up to give a short presentation during your next Council Meeting
- Municipalities host community consultations and meetings where they ask for input
- Schedule meetings directly with Councillors
- Petitions
- Protests

## Canadian Municipalities & Climate Change

Because of their extensive areas of responsibility, municipalities are an important level of government for climate action. Upwards of 60% of greenhouse gas emissions are committed by cities specifically on a global scale. Over 80 percent of Canadians live in cities and towns. The dense concentration of people in urban areas, government, business, infrastructure, and economic resources in urban areas makes them uniquely vulnerable to the growing risks of a warming world. This same density also makes cities a powerful source of resilience and resourcefulness when it comes to taking action on climate change.

Smaller centres and rural areas have some different challenges when it comes to the effects of climate change. These include effects on agriculture, and - especially in parts of Essex County, eroding shorelines. These communities also have important roles to play in combatting climate change. Examples of municipal climate action include a [ban on single-use plastics](#) or allowing [tiny houses](#) (policies that Amherstburg is currently examining). Other action may include green building standards, efficient and sustainable land use planning, and prioritizing infrastructure to support bussing and active transit within and between municipalities. Municipalities can also encourage investment by green businesses to help ensure that the transition to a green economy benefits all members of the community.

It can also be easier to contact and meet your local representatives than other levels of government, making this a good place to begin your climate policy action.

### Tips and Advice for Speaking to your Councillor

<b>Be prepared</b>	Develop a list of questions and asks, including a commitment to action.
<b>Be engaging</b>	Promote a dynamic conversation, give the reason for your meeting, and explain your concerns.
<b>Be an active listener</b>	Tailor your message according to how the Councillor responds.
<b>Be direct</b>	Ask clear and pointed questions and respectfully insist on straight answers.
<b>Be inquiring</b>	Ask for the Councillor's view on the subject and what they intend to do.
<b>Be focused</b>	If the Councillor focuses on what the upper/lower tiers or what the federal and provincial government need to do, direct them back to your specific recommendations or your general desire to see your <i>local government</i> take action on climate change.
<b>Be collaborative</b>	Ask your Councillor for advice on who else to contact about the issue and what they think would be helpful in achieving your objectives.
<b>Be honest</b>	If you are unsure of an answer, let the Councillor know that you are not sure but you can do some research and get back to them (and actually do get back to them).
<b>Be political</b>	If you're voting in the next election, let them know climate action matters to you.
<b>Be appreciative</b>	Email the Councillor to thank them for their time and follow up on your meeting.