



Climate Smart Communities

November 2015

Albany County

CSC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program is a New York State initiative to help local communities reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, prepare for impacts of climate change and save taxpayer dollars. The program is designed to address 10 focus areas outlined in the [CSC 10 Pledge Elements](#) (see below).

This CSC profile outlines Albany County's progress through the 10 pledge elements. Detailed information on actions completed, in progress, and identified for future action is provided in the tables on the following pages. If a table is missing for a particular pledge element, it means that the CSC program does not have a record of actions taken to address that pledge element.

The [CSC Certification](#) program provides local governments with a comprehensive framework to guide climate action and enables high performing communities to achieve recognition for their leadership. Each pledge element below is accompanied by a [CSC Certification Manual](#) that recommends initiatives and resources for getting started. Click on any of the pledge elements for additional information.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FACTS:

Adopted Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Pledge: 2009

CSC Pledge Elements Addressed: 9 out of 10

Total Actions Completed: 24

Government Type: County

County: Albany County

Region: Capital District

Population: 304,204

Climate Smart Communities Pledge Elements [Click links to view CSC Certification Manual]

1. [Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community](#)
2. [Set Goals. Inventory Emissions, Plan for Climate Action](#)
3. [Decrease Community Energy Use](#)
4. [Increase Community Use of Renewable Energy](#)
5. [Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate-Smart Solid Waste Management Practices](#)
6. [Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Use of Climate-Smart Land-Use Tools](#)
7. [Enhance Community Resilience and Prepare for the Effects of Climate Change](#)
8. [Support Development of a Green Innovation Economy](#)
9. [Inform and Inspire the Public](#)
10. [Commit to an Evolving Process of Climate Action](#)

Pledge Element 1: Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community

Action	Status	Description
Adopted CSC Pledge	Completed	Albany County adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge in 2009.
Formed an Internal Energy Group	Completed	Albany County formed an internal energy group that includes the Commissioner of Management and Budget, Commissioner of General Services, and the Executive Director of the Sewer District. The group is focused on routine operations and conducts a capital project review.
Create a Green Team	Completed	The County created an internal Green Team that gets together once a month to discuss energy efficiency measures in County operations.

Pledge Element 2: Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Plan for Climate Action

Action	Status	Description
Completed a Local Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory	Completed	In 2014, Albany County completed a Local Government Operations GHG Inventory for the year 2013.
Adopted the State Electricity Reduction Goal	Completed	Albany County has adopted the New York State electricity reduction goal of reducing electricity use 15 percent by 2015.

Pledge Element 3: Decrease Community Energy Use

Action	Status	Description
Energy Management System	Completed	The County has Energy Management Systems on several of their buildings, allowing the County to have live-time updates for their building energy use.
Employee Green Practices	Completed	All new County employees are given a comprehensive green policy handbook which details ways in which they can act sustainably within the County.
Recycling in County Offices	Completed	All County buildings have recycling receptacles to collect tin, glass, and paper. All staff members have a bin at their desk. The County has been able to find a vendor who will pay them 0.2 a pound for their recycling.
'Commuter Choices' Program	Completed	The Albany County "Commuter Choices" program offers employees a parking spot or discounted bus fares.
Upgrades to the TU Center	In progress	The County is working with NYPA on upgrades to the Times Union (TU) Center. Some of the work being considered includes: HVAC upgrade and an energy management system. The County is investigating a Green Bond to fund these improvements.

Pledge Element 3: Decrease Community Energy Use

Action	Status	Description
County Waste Diversion, Recycling, and Energy Sustainability Policy	Completed	In 2010, the County adopted a policy which includes a number of operational efficiency measures including a green purchasing policy and goals to buy advanced vehicles.
Upgraded Water-Sewer District Systems	Completed	At the Sewer District's North Plant, a cogeneration facility (waste to heat turbo energy generator) has been installed and will run on dehydrated sludge. It will provide between 50-75% of the facilities energy needs. All graywater is pumped across the Hudson river for commercial use. Both plants will have UV Ray disinfection systems in the near future, as mandated by NYS DEC.
Completed an Energy Audit	Completed	The County worked with NYSERDA to complete an energy audit of their operations in 2011.
Energy Efficiency Upgrades	In progress	Albany County completed energy efficiency upgrades at a municipal building at 112 State Street. In 2014, the County is planning on upgrading the HVAC at the Family Court Building, the cooling system at the Hockey Facility, the plumbing and HVAC at the Mercantile Building, the boiler and water tank at Times Union Center.

Pledge Element 4: Increase Community Use of Renewable Energy

Action	Status	Description
Create a Public Benefit Corporation	Identified	The County is considering creating a public benefit corporation for solar. They are looking at the model that Cayuga County implemented.
Solarize Albany	In progress	In 2015, Albany County residents started a Solarize Campaign and received funding under NYSERDA's Community Solar Program to organize community outreach and facilitation of a bulk solar PV purchase. Solarize Albany has been diligently working to engage citizens within Albany County to install solar on their homes. The Solarize Albany Campaign has been very successful and has increased attention on residential solar investment in the County.
Albany County Sewer District Organic to Energy Facility	Identified	In 2013, Albany County finalized a feasibility study for a Regional Source Separated Organic to Energy Facility at their South Plant using anaerobic digestion. The County is currently continuing to explore the viability of the project, and has gotten significant regional support.
Solar Panels on Hockey Facility	Completed	Albany County completed a solar installation on the hockey facility.
Install Solar Panels	Identified	The County would like to expand the use of solar at the Public Works facility and on the hockey facility.

Pledge Element 5: Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate-Smart Solid Waste Management Practices

Action	Status	Description
Implement a paperless legislation system	Completed	In 2013, the County implemented a paperless legislation system called CALM: County of Albany Legislative Management System. They are hoping to make all legislative matters electronic, including scoping out a tablet system for all county legislators.
Recycling Bins in Public Places	Completed	The County has recycling bins in all of its public areas including Lawson Lake.
Ban the Use of Polystyrene Foam Containers	Completed	In 2013, the County implemented the Food Service Waste Reduction Action which bans the use of polystyrene foam disposable food service ware and requires the use of biodegradable or compostable food service ware by chain food establishments in Albany County.
Albany County Solid Waste Advisory Committee	Completed	The County Executive created the Albany County Solid Waste Advisory Committee to create recommendations to reduce the volume of waste going into the City of Albany landfill given that the projected closing date is 2022. The Committee has also focused on organics diversion and recycling.

Pledge Element 6: Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Use of Climate-Smart Land-Use Tools

Action	Status	Description
Agricultural Protection Plan and Program	Completed	The Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan The Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan includes goals and strategies to support and enhance Albany County's agricultural industry and agricultural resources. The County coordinates tax foreclosure property amongst the communities in Albany County to keep agricultural land in current use, preserve buildings, and redevelop properties.
Albany County Rail Trail	In progress	In 2013, the County received a grant through the Cleaner, Greener Communities Program to develop a Rail Trail which connects suburban areas to the urban core, which will enhance the potential for commuters to replace their normal vehicle commute with a pedestrian route.
Advanced Vehicles and Charging Stations	Identified	Albany County is working with NYSERDA to install charging stations for use by the public and/or the Albany County Fleet. The County is also working to purchase hybrid and plug-in vehicles.
Lawson Lake	Completed	After taking office in 2012, the County Executive identified Lawson Lake as a County asset and worked with partners to remediate the area for public use.

Pledge Element 7: Enhance Community Resilience and Prepare for the Effects of Climate Change

Action	Status	Description
Updating Emergency Management Plan and Program	Completed	The County updated their Emergency Management Plan and entire program. They are working closely with the Department of Health and other departments to ensure continuity of operations in the event of a disaster. They are also conducting table top exercises to ensure people are prepared.
NY PRIZE Stage 1	In progress	The County was awarded a grant by NYSERDA to conduct a feasibility study for the construction of a microgrid so that critical facilities may be kept up and running in the event of a severe climactic event.

Pledge Element 8: Support Development of a Green Innovation Economy

Action	Status	Description
Redevelop A Brownfield Site	In progress	The County worked with the DEC to remediate a residential brownfield site up to standards where it could be redeveloped.
Sustainability Included in the Economic Development Plan	Identified	Economic Development efforts are being ramped up by the County. They are exploring how to incorporate sustainability measures and green innovation opportunities. Internal restructuring has slowed these efforts somewhat.

Pledge Element 9: Inform and Inspire the Public

Action	Status	Description
Sustainability Outreach Website	In progress	Albany County is creating a new website that will communicate its sustainability efforts.
Live Life Local Festival	Completed	In 2013, the County sponsored a free festival that focused on locally made and produced products. Live Life Local provided an opportunity for residents from the Capital District to taste and purchase products from vendors who represent the diversity that Albany County has to offer in the areas of food and the arts.

Pledge Element 10: Commit to an Evolving Process of Climate Action

Action	Status	Description
Open Space Advisory Committee Participation	Completed	In 2013, the County worked with other key stakeholders to give input to the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan, which was facilitated by the NYS DEC.

Pledge Element 10: Commit to an Evolving Process of Climate Action

Action	Status	Description
Stormwater Coalition of Albany County	Completed	Albany County is both a member and host of the Stormwater Coalition of Albany County. The Coalition was formed in 2008 via an inter-municipal agreement which enables Coalition members to share services and work cooperatively implementing New York State stormwater regulations. Other Coalition members include: City of Albany, Village of Altamont, Town of Bethlehem, City of Cohoes, Town of Colonie, Village of Colonie, Village of Green Island, Town of Guilderland, Village of Menands, Town of New Scotland, City of Watervilet, University at Albany ? SUNY Uptown.
Capital Region Sustainability Plan	Completed	Albany County participated in Capital District's regional sustainability planning process. Under Phase I of NYSERDA's Cleaner, Greener Communities Program, each region developed a regional comprehensive sustainability plan. http://sustainablecapitalregion.org/

For more information about the Albany County's climate protection efforts, please contact: Michael McLaughlin at (518) 447-7040



Climate Smart Communities

The Climate Smart Communities Program is jointly sponsored by six New York State Agencies: the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Health, Department of Transportation, and Public Service Commission.