



Climate Smart Communities

November 2015

Town of Niskayuna

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 the Town of Niskayuna'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: 2011

CSC Pledge Elements Addressed: 10 out of 10

Total Actions Completed: 25

Government Type: Town

County: Schenectady County

Region: Capital District

Population: 21,781

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
Conservation Advisory Committee	In progress	VHB completed a climate protection "roadmap" to provide guidance on how to get started on addressing the CSC Pledge Elements. Niskayuna's Conservation Advisory Committee is in the process of taking over climate protection efforts in the Town.
Adopted CSC Pledge	Completed	The Town adopted the Climate Smart Communities pledge in 2011.
CSC Certification	Identified	The Town is interested in becoming a Certified Climate Smart Community.

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

Action	Status	Description
Government GHG Inventory	Completed	The Town of Niskayuna completed a local government operations greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for baseline year 2010.
Community GHG Inventory	Completed	The Town of Niskayuna's community wide inventory was conducted as a part of the Capital District's Regional Inventory for baseline year 2010.
Climate Action Plan	Identified	The City is interested in working with Sustainable Saratoga to develop a Climate Action Plan that focuses on greenhouse gas reductions using the CSC Climate Action Plan Template.

Pledge Element 3: Decrease Community Energy Use

Action	Status	Description
Installed Motion Sensors at Town Hall	Completed	In 2007 the Town put in motion sensors for rooms, restrooms, and hallways to automate lighting fixtures at Town Hall.
Conduct Energy Audit	Completed	The Town conducted an energy audit of all municipal buildings in 2010.
Buy Green - Save Green Program	Completed	The Town received a grant from NYSERDA to upgrade equipment through the Buy Green - Save Green program to upgrade computers, printers, and copiers.
Upgrading Wastewater Treatment Plant and Processes	In progress	The Town is working with NYSERDA to assess energy efficiency of the wastewater plant and how to improve water treatment processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Town will apply the lessons learned from this analysis to the wastewater treatment expansion project that is scheduled for completion in summer of 2016.

Pledge Element 3: Decrease Community Energy Use

Action	Status	Description
Automated HVAC for Building Occupancy	Completed	In 2009 the Town put in a system to automate the air handling system to align with building occupancy at Town Hall.

Pledge Element 4: Increase Community Use of Renewable Energy

Action	Status	Description
Installed Solar Panels	Completed	Niskayuna Town Hall generates electricity from free-standing solar panels through a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Monolith Solar Associates. About 30% of electricity produced is used to power Town Hall and the remaining 70% is sold back into the grid by the solar company. The Town also has solar panels installed at the wastewater treatment plant and the highway garage. The Town is in the process of exploring options for remote net metering to power off-site, Town-owned facilities.
Adopted a Wind Energy Facilities Ordinance	Completed	In 2010, the Town adopted a Wind Energy Facilities Ordinance to guide the construction and operation of small and large wind energy facilities in the Town of Niskayuna.
Expedite Solar Permitting	In progress	The Town is in the process of streamlining their solar permitting processes to expedite small-scale photo-voltaic systems for residents and businesses. The Town would also like to promote the solar permitting processes on their website.

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

Action	Status	Description
Single-Stream Recycling Program	Completed	The Town accepts co-mingled items, metals and C&D, and electronics.
Hazardous Household Waste Collection Days	Completed	The Town participates in the County's Hazardous Household Waste Collection Days.

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

Action	Status	Description
Tree Planting Plans	Completed	The Town requires that a Tree Planting Plan be submitted with site plans.

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

Action	Status	Description
Sidewalks or multi-use path requirement for new developments	Completed	All new developments are required to install a sidewalk or multi-use path.
Updated the Comprehensive Plan	Completed	The Town updated their Comprehensive Plan in 2014 to include sustainability principles and to encourage the Town to promote Climate Smart development strategies.
Increased Connectivity and Expanded Bike Paths	Completed	As a part of a Transportation Improvement Grant, the Town extended the Mohawk Bike Path to the southeastern area of Town and to local parks to encourage biking instead of driving to games and events.

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

Action	Status	Description
Adopt a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan	Completed	The Town Board participated in the development of the County's Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan, which has been approved by FEMA, and adopted it as the Town's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.
Stormwater Program	Completed	The Town of Niskayuna is classified as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) and requires permits for stormwater discharges or urbanized areas and construction activities.
Conducted Vulnerability Assessment of WWTP	Completed	The Town conducted a vulnerability assessment of the WWTP and adopted measures to address major storms. The Town also participates in the Mohawk Emergency Management Group to address future issues along the Mohawk River.

Pledge Element 8: Support Development of a Green Innovation Economy

Action	Status	Description
Host Farmers' Markets	Completed	The Town hosts farmers' markets every weekend May through October on Upper Union Street to encourage residents to buy local, fresh food and produce.
Join the Energy Improvement Corporation	Identified	The Town would like to join the Energy Improvement Corporation to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades in residential and commercial properties, under the Energize NY (PACE) Benefit Financing Program. The Town would like to work with the County to establish PACE financing.

Pledge Element 9: Inform and Inspire the Public

Action	Status	Description
Publicly Display Town Hall Energy Consumption	Completed	In 2011 the Town participated in a State pilot program to install a monitor to publicly display Town Hall energy consumption in the lobby. The graphs and charts display cumulative energy savings and daily energy savings.
Manage a Stormwater Information Booth during Niska-Day	Completed	The Town manages a booth at the annual Niska-Day event in May to educate the public about stormwater management.
Earth Hour Resolution	Completed	The Town adopted an Earth Hour Resolution, along with Schenectady County, asking all residents to join together and turn off all non-essential lighting, appliances, and electronics from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. for the event.

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

Action	Status	Description
Member of Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee	Completed	The Town serves on the Schenectady County Water Quality Coordinating Committee.
Stormwater Management Program and Annual Reports	Completed	The Town has a Stormwater Management Program and annually reports on water quality and conducts public outreach to reduce flooding or contamination.
NYSDEC Email Subscriber	Completed	The Town stays informed about new CSC resources, funding opportunities, upcoming webinars, workshops and other climate-related events through the NYS DEC's Climate Smart Communities email distribution list.

For more information about the Town of Niskayuna's climate protection efforts, please contact: Laura Robertston at (518) 386-4530



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.