

# 2024 Annual **PLANNING & ZONING WORKSHOP**



## **Information & Program**

Friday, October 18, 2024  
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

**Annual workshop on planning for sustainability, water  
quality, & zoning in the Capital Region of New York**

AICP CM available upon completion

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AICP members can earn Certification Maintenance (CM) credits for this activity [or many activities at this event]. When CM credits are available, they are noted at the end of an activity description. More information about AICP's CM program can be found at [www.planning.org/cm](http://www.planning.org/cm). **AICP members must be in attendance for the duration of the event in order to receive CM Credit. CM# 9298949**

Town, village, and city zoning board of appeals, planning board members, and county planning board members are required by state statute to obtain four hours of training a year. Attendees can pick up their certificates at the check-in desk after lunch to bring back to their municipalities.

# WORKSHOP AGENDA

- 8:30 **Registration, Networking, and Breakfast**

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- 9:15 *Plenary Session*  
**Capital Region Climate Action Plan** (1.25 S&R CM) *Congressman Paul Tonko,  
Jim Yienger & Todd Fabozzi*

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- 10:45 **Coffee & Networking**

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- 11:00 **Concurrent Sessions #1**
  - **Aud.** **Running Meetings, Proper Decision-Making & Public Participation** (1 CM) *Mark Schachner*
  - **R1** **Clean Energy Communities: Climate Smart Communities Panel Discussion** (1 CM) *Charles Davidson, Laura Faulk,  
Steve Powers, Bill Jennings,  
Jason West & Haley Balcanoff*
  - **R2** **Securing Our Water Future with DWSP2 Resources & Support** (1 CM) *Tyler Bobko & Lauren Axford*

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- 12:00 **Lunch**

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- 1:00 **Concurrent Sessions #2**
  - **Aud.** **E-Bikes, E-Scooters and that Unicycle Thing: Planning for Micromobility** (1 CM) *Sandy Misiewicz & Dan Suraci*
  - **R1** **Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning** (1 S&R CM) *Dan Barusch, Don Meltz &  
Neil Bettez*
  - **R2** **Stormwater Considerations for Solar Development in New York State: Where Are We Headed?** (1 CM) *Julie Melancon & Ben Fiorese*

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- 2:00 **Coffee & Networking**

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- 2:15 **Concurrent Sessions #3**
  - **Aud.** **Recent Changes in Federal and State Freshwater Wetlands Laws** (1 Law CM) *Terresa Bakner &  
Mark Castiglione*
  - **R1** **Planning for Solar** (1 CM) *John Scavo, Kelly Jasinski &  
Jennifer Manierre*
  - **R2** **Hot Topics Facing Rural and Small Communities** (1 CM) *Nan Stolzenburg &  
Jaclyn Hakes*

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- 3:30 **End of Program**

# SESSION DETAILS

**9:15 AM** Plenary Session

**Capital Region Climate Action Plan** | Auditorium

**CM | 1.25 S&R**

This session will discuss climate action planning and the progress to date of the development of the Capital Region Climate Action Plan. The session will review proposed greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, sector specific reduction measures, the process for developing the plan, and ways in which community stakeholders can be engaged.

**Presented by:** Congressman Paul D. Tonko; Todd Fabozzi & Jim Yienger

**11:00 AM** Concurrent Sessions #1

**Running Meetings, Proper Decision-Making and Public Participation** | Auditorium

**CM | 1.0**

There are many ways to run Planning and Zoning meetings; some decidedly more optimal than others. There are also many decision-making practices and techniques, again, some better than others. Finally, public participation can have substantial impact on successful decision-making and there are numerous ways to manage and not manage public participation. This presentation will focus on many of these issues in our efforts to maintain and enhance respect for and integrity of the Planning and Zoning decision-making process.

**Presented by:** Mark Schachner

**Clean Energy Communities: Climate Smart Communities Panel Discussion** | Room 1

**CM | 1.0**

This session will include representatives from six regional municipalities who will be discussing their experiences with NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities Program and NYSDEC's Climate Smart Communities Program. Haley Balcanoff from CDRPC will provide an introductory overview of the CSC and CEC programs.

**Presented by:** Charles Davidson, Laura Faulk, Steve Powers, Bill Jennings, Jason West & Haley Balcanoff

**Securing Our Water Future with DWSP2 Resources and Support** | Room 2

**CM | 1.0**

The Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) helps local governments develop community-specific drinking water protection plans to strengthen relationships, foster collaboration, and engage stakeholders. The goal is to protect public drinking water sources now and in the future. The state is providing municipalities with a free technical assistance provider to help develop and implement their protection programs. This session will outline the available assistance and resources, showcase communities that have successfully completed this process, and discuss potential next steps for interested municipalities.

**Presented by:** Tyler Bobko & Lauren Axford

**1:00 PM** Concurrent Sessions #2

**E-Bikes, E-Scooters and that Unicycle: Planning for Micromobility** | Auditorium

**CM | 1.0**

Micromobility has rapidly gained popularity in cities as a transportation option. In response to the demand for walking and biking facilities, many jurisdictions are exploring micromobility for short trips. This session will cover its national rise, regional use, safety challenges, planning considerations, and local regulatory options.

**Presented by:** Sandy Misiewicz & Dan Suraci

**Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning** | Room 1

**CM | 1.0 S&R**

This session will provide information about climate adaptation and resilience planning. Gain insight from the case studies in Columbia County and Lake George, as well as learn about resources and opportunities from the Hudson River Estuary Program

**Presented by:** Dan Barusch, Don Meltz & Neil Bettez

**Stormwater Considerations for Solar Development in New York State** | Room 2

**CM | 1.0**

New York has ambitious renewable energy goals. Join us to discuss these initiatives and their impact on regulatory decision-making. We'll explore lessons learned from emerging facilities and how the DEC is using this information to develop policies for environmentally sound construction techniques.

**Presented by:** Julie Melancon & Ben Fiorese

**2:15 PM** Concurrent Sessions #3

**Recent Changes in Federal and State Wetlands Case Law** | Auditorium

**CM | 1.0 Law**

This session will cover the regulation of Waters of the U.S. under the Clean Water Act, including the 2023 Sackett USSCt decision and Biden's regulations, a history of Freshwater Wetlands regulation under ECL Article 24, the 2022 amendments, and the practical consequences of these changes for municipalities and economic development.

**Presented by:** Teresa Bakner & Mark Castiglione

**Planning for Solar** | Room 1

**CM | 1.0**

This session will provide a general overview of local solar planning and regulation, as well as the experiences of two local communities with solar planning, project review and implementation.

**Presented by:** John Scavo, Kelly Jasinski & Jennifer Manierre

**Hot Topics Facing Rural and Small Communities** | Room 2

**CM | 1.0**

This session will discuss key planning and zoning topics facing the region's rural and small communities. From solar development and the changing face of agricultural businesses to short term rentals and homesteading, this session will explore the issues and identify potential approaches, tools and resources available to communities to address.

**Presented by:** Nan Stolzenburg & Jaclyn Hakes



# ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

## **Session:** Capital Region Climate Action Plan

**Congressman Paul D. Tonko** represents New York's 20th Congressional District and is an eighth-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He serves as the Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, & Critical Materials, and co-chairs the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition and the Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus. Previously, he was president and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and served 25 years in the New York State Assembly. Tonko holds a degree in mechanical and industrial engineering from Clarkson University.

**Jim Yienger** is Principal of Climate Action Associates (CAA), where he provides policy and technical services to state and local government clients. With over 15 years of experience in energy and climate planning, he helps communities find practical solutions for environmental protection, cost savings, and service improvement. A recognized leader in New York, he led a GHG Working Group convened by NYSERDA for the Climate Smart Communities Program. Previously, he directed the technical division of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, creating tools and services for the organization. He has published numerous peer-reviewed papers on air pollution, emissions, climate, energy, and local sustainability.

**Todd Fabozzi** has been a professional urban planner since 1993 and has worked for the Capital District Regional Planning Commission since 1996. He has developed the Commission's Geographic Information System; has lectured extensively on regional growth; and has been involved in numerous smart growth, sustainability, and watershed protection studies and programs. He currently is the Territory Director for the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program and the NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities Coordinator Program. He has a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Albany, where he taught GIS. He currently teaches urban planning at Skidmore College.

## **Session:** Running Meetings, Proper Decision-Making and Public Participation

**Mark Schachner, Esq.**, is Senior Principal Attorney at MILLER, MANNIX, SCHACHNER & HAFNER in Glens Falls and Round Lake, specializing in municipal, environmental, and land use law. He represents several towns in Saratoga County, serves as counsel for the Saratoga County Water Authority, and has authored key works on New York's SEQRA and planning law ethics. A graduate of Brown University and Boston University School of Law, Schachner lectures widely on planning and zoning matters and is Vice President of the New York Planning Federation.

## **Session:** Clean Energy Communities: Climate Smart Communities Panel Discussion

**Haley Balcanoff** is a Sustainability Planner at CDRPC. She provides outreach and technical support with NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities and NYS Climate Smart Communities programs. Haley has assisted many communities in earning match-free grant funding for clean energy projects, as well as facilitated the development of municipal greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans. She graduated with distinction from Pratt Institute's Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment with a Master of Science in Sustainable Environmental Systems and has a BA from Fordham University.

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## **Session:** Clean Energy Communities: Climate Smart Communities Panel Discussion

**Charles Davidson** holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Public Administration from the University at Albany and serves as the Sustainability Coordinator for Schenectady County. He manages hazardous waste and electronics collection events, oversees the County's recycling education campaign, and installs EV charging stations. In April 2024, he helped the County achieve silver certification in the Climate Smart Communities program. Davidson collaborates with local organizations, including the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Schenectady City School District, to promote sustainability across the County.

**Laura Faulk** draws on her professional background in science, engineering, and management to work for equitable solutions to the climate crisis. In addition to serving as the Chair of the Saratoga Springs Climate Smart Task Force, she is currently on the Board of Sustainable Saratoga and chair of their Climate and Energy Committee. Laura is also on the leadership team of The Climate Reality Project's Capital Region, NY Chapter and co-chair of Climate Reality's New York State Coalition. In 2023, she was awarded the Alfredo Sirkis Memorial Green Ring Award by former Vice President Al Gore for her work in climate communication and advocacy. She lives in Saratoga Springs with her family.

**Steve Powers**, born in Philadelphia and a New Lebanon, NY resident since 2018, spent 18 years in Nepal as a mountain guide and trek organizer after earning a degree in Environmental Studies. There, he helped establish the Kathmandu Environmental Education Project and served as Treasurer of the Chandra Gurung Conservation Trust. As Chair of New Lebanon's Climate Smart Communities Task Force, Powers led the town to become the first in Columbia County to achieve Bronze and Silver status in the program. He also serves on the Town Board, Conservation Advisory Council, and Zoning Rewrite Committee, while operating his company, Hidden Treasure Tours.

**Bill Jennings** was first elected to the Stephentown Town Council in 2010 and re-elected for three consecutive terms. During his tenure, he oversaw the Transfer Station, helped restructure the Town Budget, updated Land Use Regulations, and led the Business Development Sub-Committee. In 2023, he became the liaison for the Stephentown Clean Energy Communities Committee (SCEC). After choosing not to seek re-election, Jennings remained an active SCEC member, contributing to the Community Solar project and working to secure NYSERDA funding for energy-efficient upgrades to the Town Hall.

**Jason West** a SUNY New Paltz graduate with their degrees in History and Visual Art, was elected Mayor of New Paltz at age 25. During his two terms, he prioritized affordable housing, sustainable land use, and public involvement, gaining international attention in 2004 for marrying same-sex couples. He later co-founded the Walkkill River Watershed Alliance and earned an M.S. in Climate Science and Policy from Bard College. Since 2020, West has served as Albany's Director of Sustainability, overseeing energy programs, climate initiatives, and managing the city's publicly-owned streetlights.

# ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

## **Session:** Securing Our Water Future with DWSP2 Resources and Support

**Tyler Bobko** assists with the development of the statewide Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) by coordinating with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and other state and local agencies. He maintains the source water program guidance and assists communities with developing and implementing their own source water protection plans. He also coordinates education and outreach for the program, compiles summary reports, analyzes data, and engages partners at various levels. Tyler joined NEIWPC in January 2024 and earned his M.S. in Biodiversity, Conservation, and Policy from the University at Albany.

**Lauren Axford** is the Open Space Coordinator for the Town of Bethlehem. Lauren runs the Town's Farms and Forest Conservation Program, where she assists landowners in exploring and achieving their conservation goals. Lauren has a diverse farming background, is passionate about promoting land access for BIPOC farmers, and encouraging land management practices that will increase resiliency and adaptation in the face of climate change. In addition to serving on the Town's DWSP2 stakeholder group, Lauren serves as the chair of the Historic Heath Farm Advisory Committee, and is a contributing writer for *The Natural Farmer*, the newspaper of the Northeast Organic Farm Association.

## **Session:** E-Bikes, E-Scooters and that Unicycle Thing: Planning for Micromobility

**Sandy Misiewicz**, AICP, has been with the Capital Region Transportation Council, the designated metropolitan planning organization for Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties, for over 25 years. With a background in environmental, land use, and transportation planning, she became executive director in 2021. In this role, she oversees a federally funded annual planning work program, capital projects, and the regional transportation plan. Misiewicz holds a bachelor's in environmental studies from Binghamton University and a master's in urban and regional planning from the University at Albany. She is a member of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners.

**Dan Suraci**, AICP, is a transportation planning and policy expert with experience across public, private, and nonprofit sectors. He is recognized for his work on equitable mobility solutions and authored APTA's national guide on Bicycle Integration with Transit. Dan led "Extending Transit: Completing New York's First and Last Mile," the country's first statewide study of bicycle-transit integration, and managed the New York Cycling Census, the largest statewide cycling survey in the U.S. His projects include developing New York State's active transportation training curriculum, wayfinding systems for Penn Station, and feasibility studies for the Empire State Trail.



## Session: Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning

**Don Meltz** is an AICP certified planner, currently working as senior planner for Columbia County, NY. He was appointed the county's Climate Smart Coordinator in February 2023. Don is also an adjunct faculty member at Marist College, teaching Intro and Advanced classes in GIS since 2016. For 20 years prior to joining Columbia County, he was a planning consultant working for dozens of municipalities in the Hudson Valley and upstate NY.

**Neil Bettez** who is the Climate Team coordinator for the Hudson River Estuary Program works with municipalities to make them more resilient to climate change. Neil's background includes working as a scientist. He is an ecosystem ecologist with a PhD and has done research on watershed scale biogeochemical budgets and urban ecology and a local elected official. He was a Town Supervisor for 8 years.

**Dan Barusch**, AICP, has served as Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town and Village of Lake George since 2015, becoming the youngest person in the state to hold this position at age 25. Over the past eight years, he has helped secure over \$20 million in grant funding for Lake George, including a \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award. Dan serves on over 20 committees and boards, including the New York Planning Federation and multiple Climate Smart Task Forces. He holds a Master's in Urban and Environmental Planning and a Bachelor's in Design Studies from Arizona State University, and an Associate Degree in Architectural Technology from SUNY Delhi.

## Session: Stormwater Considerations for Solar Development in New York State

**Julie Melancon** is Section Chief of the NYSDEC Division of Water's new Green Energy Management Section (GEMS) and oversees the Division's growing portfolio of renewable energy projects statewide. She is a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control, and a member of both the International Erosion Control Association and the National Association for Environmental Professionals. She has more than 20 years of stormwater experience in both the public and private sectors.

**Ben Fiorese** is an Environmental Program Specialist Trainee 1 at NYSDEC. Working in the Green Energy Management Section (GEMS), they assist with landward permitting and construction oversight of renewable energy facilities and transmission lines throughout the state.

## Session: Recent Changes in Federal and State Wetlands Case Law

**Terresa Bakner**, Esq., a partner at Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna LLP, represents clients in permitting, administrative and enforcement proceedings before State and federal agencies, such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of Public Service, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and OSHA. Ms. Bakner assists in obtaining land use approvals for commercial, industrial, residential and energy projects and represents clients in projects involving brownfield redevelopment, wetlands laws and regulations, protection of endangered species and critical habitats, and the preservation of archaeological and historic resources.

# ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

## Session: Planning for Solar

**John Scavo**, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town of Clifton Park, has 24 years of planning experience. He began his career in 2000 as a City Planner for Cohoes, where he also chaired the Industrial Development Agency and co-founded the Cohoes Local Development Corporation. In 2004, he joined Laberge Group as a Senior Planner before becoming Clifton Park's Director of Planning in 2008. Scavo oversees long-term planning, zoning, and capital projects. He holds an MBA from Southern New Hampshire University and a B.A. from SUNY Cortland.

**Kelly Jasinski** is a councilwoman for the Town of Ballston. She previously served the town on their Clean Energies Committee and Farmland Preservation and Protection Committee. She continues to work with the Green Community Committee on CEC and CSC actions. She holds degrees in Reading, Elementary Education and Music.

**Jennifer Manierre** is the Director of Clean Energy Siting at NYSERDA, where she assists local governments with best practices and permitting for solar, wind, and battery storage projects. She holds a B.A. in Geology and Economics from Hamilton College, a Master's in Education from Elmira College, and a Master's in Ecological Economics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Ms. Manierre is a Certified Energy Manager and a LEED Accredited Professional specializing in Neighborhood Development.

## Session: Hot Topics Facing Rural and Small Communities

**Nan Stolzenburg**, FAICP, CEP, is a principal consultant with over 75 planning projects in eastern and central New York, focusing on small and rural communities. She has led numerous comprehensive plans, SEQR reviews, and economic programs, emphasizing public engagement. Stolzenburg has received multiple awards, including one in 2014 for developing the NYS DEC SEQR SEAF and FEAFF Workbook. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from SUNY ESF, an M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from UMass Amherst, and an MRP in Regional Planning from the University at Albany. In 1992, she founded Community Planning & Environmental Associates (CP&EA), a New York State Certified Woman-Owned Business specializing in land use and environmental planning.

**Jaclyn Hakes**, AICP, is an Associate and Director of Planning Services at MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C., with over 23 years of experience in consensus-based planning. She specializes in comprehensive planning, complete streets, public engagement, resiliency planning, waterfront revitalization, zoning, and SEQRA/NEPA processes. A graduate of Binghamton University and the University at Albany, Ms. Hakes provides technical support to land use boards in the Capital Region and frequently speaks on planning topics at local universities. She serves on several boards, including Leadership Saratoga and the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park, and volunteers with the Capital Region Future City competition.



