



**Climate Smart
Communities**
Certified Bronze

New Paltz Climate Smart Task Force Annual Report of Activities 2020

Climate Smart Task Force (CSTF) Members: Active members include Janelle Peotter, Amanda Gotto, Mark Varian, Jim O'Dowd, Wendy Rudder, Orelle Feher, and Lynne Cherry

Bronze Certification: In March the Town and Village of New Paltz achieved bronze level certification as part of the New York State Climate Smart Communities Program. In order to be Bronze certified, every community must show that it has an active climate action task force that includes municipal and citizen representatives and complete a minimum of actions equivalent to 120 points. The Village of New Paltz and Town of New Paltz had to apply separately but both completed 158 points, 38 points higher than what is required for Bronze certification. Actions taken in New Paltz that qualified for certification included: creating an ongoing Climate Smart Task Force, appointing a Climate Smart Coordinator, completing comprehensive Town and Village Local Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventories, adopting Community Choice Aggregation, installing LED street lights, receiving Energy Code Enforcement Training, having a Unified Solar Permit, providing publicly accessible EV charging stations, incorporating Smart Growth Principles into Land-use Policies and Regulations, conducting a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, having solar panels on a municipal building, and hosting climate related public events.

New Actions Towards Silver Certification as a Climate Smart Community:

- In December 2019, the Climate Smart grant application for a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) was approved and New Paltz was awarded a DEC Hudson River Estuary grant. Climate Smart created an RFP and, with other stakeholders, interviewed candidates and selected Upstate GIS as the consultant in March. A State Master Contract was drafted by Climate Smart and approved by DEC in March 2020. The NRI kick-off meeting was held on March 24. Data sources and photos were compiled by the team and sent to the consultant over 2Q. The set of draft maps and the draft report outline were reviewed with the consultant and DEC manager by Climate Smart and key Town and Village stakeholders at a team meeting on July 29. The final maps, draft report, and the interactive Story Map were reviewed with the consultant by Climate Smart and key Town and Village stakeholders at a team meeting on Nov 10 and are currently being revised by the consultant. The target for presentation of the penultimate drafts to the Town and Village Boards is March

2021. Climate Smart has prepared the grant-required quarterly reports and documentation for submission by the Town to DEC for reimbursement of the consultant's invoices.

- A Town and Village Flood Mapping project was completed by Woodwell Climate Research Center. The project went above and beyond FEMA mapping by incorporating both riverine and rainfall flooding and also included climate-change precipitation predictions for New Paltz over the rest of this century. New Paltz was one of three small municipalities in the US chosen for this pilot program and was sponsored by ICLEI on the strength of our Climate Smart achievements and commitment. Although the consultant's cost is estimated to have been \$20,000, as a result of having been chosen for the pilot the project was completed at no \$ cost to the Town or Village. The project required Climate Smart to coordinate the provision of data and resource information and attend three team meetings with the consultants. The flood map presentation was given at the joint Town and Village Board Meeting on November 4th, 2020; has also been given by Climate Smart to the task force and the Town EnCB, and will be offered to the Village EPB, the Historic Conservation Board, CWOSP, the Town and Village Planning Boards, and the Police and Fire chiefs.
- Climate Smart Resiliency Planning tools were completed for the Town and for the Village with Cornell Cooperative Extension consultants, with input from key Village and Town staff. We were sponsored by DEC Hudson River Estuary, at no \$ cost to either municipality. Results and recommendations were presented at the joint Town and Village Board Meeting on Sept 9.
- Updates of the Town and Village Local Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventories are in process with a student intern and support from Town Finance and Village DPW.

Task Force Meetings:

Meetings were held every third Monday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Agendas and minutes are archived on the Village and Town of New Paltz websites.

Education and Awareness:

- New Paltz Climate Change Solutions Meetups (141 Meet-Up members) are held on the first Tuesday of each month at various locations. The following were topics in 2020:
Plant Based Foods, Measuring Your Carbon Footprint, Climate Smart Voting, Refrigerants, Climate Smart Investing, Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Your Electric Bill But Were Afraid To Ask, Dark Skies and Climate Smart Lighting, Climate Smart Landscaping, and Tree Planting.
- New Paltz Climate Smart Newsletters: created and widely distributed monthly
- Climate Smart Book Club established in February and meets monthly. Now with 49 members.
- Presentation to New Paltz Rotary in January 2020

- Social Media Presence on Facebook, Instagram and Meetup
Facebook: 46 posts on our group Climate Smart New Paltz
Instagram: 43 posts, 262 followers
New Paltz Climate Change Solutions Meetup: 141 Members
- Mentored 2 interns – 1 from Wallkill High School, 1 from SUNY New Paltz
- Climate Smart Coordinator and Project Manager were invited to attend ICLEI's nationwide Climate Action and Adaptation Plan training. The course met twice monthly over 7 months.
- It should be noted that our normal face-to-face community outreach events - such as the Climate Smart annual potluck meeting, Earth Day Fair table, New Paltz regatta table, Green Fair table, Interfaith Winter Expo participation, Zero-Emission Vehicle Parade and Green Vendor Fair – were not available this year due to COVID-19.

Additional Related Activities on Other Boards & Committees

CSTF members participated on the Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, Environmental Conservation Board, Town Planning Board, Ad Hoc Solar Law Committee, Solar at the Landfill Subcommittee, Ad Hoc Complete Streets Committee, Climate Action Coalition, New Yorkers for Cool Refrigeration Management, Ulster County Solar Parking Canopy Working Group and Ulster County Climate Smart Committee.