



**Climate Smart Canandaigua Task Force  
Annual Progress Report**

**2020**



**Climate Smart  
Communities**  
Certified Bronze

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## **Climate Smart Communities: An Introduction**

Climate Smart Communities is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. In doing so, Climate Smart Communities can advance community goals for health & safety, economic vitality, energy independence, and quality of life.

The program has two designations—registered and certified. Thus far, 290 registered communities have made a commitment to act by passing the Climate Smart Communities pledge. Certified communities are the foremost leaders in the state; they have gone beyond the Climate Smart Communities pledge by completing and documenting a suite of actions that mitigate and adapt to climate change at the local level. On April 23, 2019, the City of Canandaigua became the 23<sup>rd</sup> Climate Smart Certified Community when it received its Bronze designation and the first to enter the program certified.

## **Climate Smart Canandaigua Task Force**

In addition to the work required to earn Climate Smart Community Certification, the Climate Smart Canandaigua (CSC) Task Force was formed to actively educate and engage the public with critical information and vital opportunities to mitigate climate change. CSC is comprised of community stakeholders, including two City Councilmembers, Staff, and citizens representing a variety of backgrounds and community organizations, and is committed to collaborating with City Council to accomplish plans, facilitate programs, and offer activities and events that align with the Climate Smart Communities Certification Program.

### **Members**

Chair: Thomas Lyon  
Coordinator: Rob Richardson  
Maria Bucci  
Erich Dittmar  
Lauren Dittmar  
Chris Glattly  
Nathan Henry  
Ellen Polimeni  
Dave Poteet  
Karen White  
Ryan Wilmer  
(Vacancy)

## **Our Mission**

- Provide ongoing implementation of actions related to climate change and increase efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and achieve cost savings in the process.
- Assess baseline conditions, establish goals and develop plans and suggest policies to achieve goals.
- Educate the community and stakeholders on the value of the goals and plans.

## **2020: A Look Back**

After an extremely successful 2019, the Climate Smart Canandaigua Task Force entered the new year with a concrete work plan for 2020. On December 19, 2019, Climate Smart Canandaigua was awarded new NYS DEC grants to help fund Government Operations and Community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventories, a Natural Resources Inventory, and a Climate Vulnerability Assessment. Once completed, the data obtained from these completed studies will provide the Climate Smart Task Force with the tools to track progress, the information necessary to guide future Climate Smart Communities Actions, and strengthen our push to become the first Silver Certified Climate Smart Community in Upstate, New York. While there were other items on the CSC agenda, including a Green Vendor Fair, a Solid Waste Reduction mailer, and Community Choice Aggregation, these studies (each taking anywhere from 6-9 months to complete) were intended to be the Task Force's primary focus in 2020.

Despite the preparation that went into what the Task Force hoped would be an exceptionally productive year, the universe had other plans. Much like everything else, COVID-19 had a tremendous impact on the CSC initiative. In March, when the world essentially shut down, we were forced to as well. In addition to being unable to meet for 4 months, our Green Vendor Fair, which had been completely planned for March 28<sup>th</sup> and was less than two weeks away, needed to be cancelled. More important, the loss of revenue to the City put the future of the aforementioned grant studies in doubt. Without the data from those studies, the City has no realistic chance of achieving Silver Certification. At the time of this report being prepared, funding for the Impact Earth environmental studies has been included in the Proposed City of Canandaigua 2021 Budget, as well as additional funds to begin composting in municipal buildings. Should those resources be removed from the Adopted 2021 Budget, every effort will be made to find the matching funds required to complete those studies before the grant expires in 2025.

## **CSC Mission #1**

*Provide ongoing implementation of actions related to climate change and increase efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and achieve cost savings in the process.*

### **Action Item: Composting Program**

- **Results:** Completed/In Progress. After disseminating 440 bins to City residents, the program is currently on hold until more funding can be identified to purchase more compost bins. An FDA grant was written but unsuccessful.
- **Challenges:** Making sure the public is aware of the program, managing requests, and organizing delivery. We recognize the importance that participants are educated on the process of composting. To make sure the program was successful, CSC partnered with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County and Wood Library to hold several “Composting 101” workshops.
- **Next Steps:** Identify funding to revive the program. Once more bins are available, work on community education and engagement around composting.

### **Action Item: Zero-Waste Guidelines**

- **Results:** In Progress. Zero Waste Guidelines have been drafted, and the group is ready to start showing them, to community members for feedback. The CSC is working on scheduling a meeting with the BID to review these guidelines and provide an opportunity for feedback.
- **Challenges:** Potential lack of will by individuals and organizations to make efforts towards Zero Waste events due to perceived added cost and inconveniences. Education and easy-to-adopt strategies needed to motivate event organizers.
- **Next Steps:** Work with community agencies who will utilize these guidelines to finalize them. Once finalized, the guidelines will be presented to City Council in the hope that all events held in the City of Canandaigua can be Zero-Waste Events.

### **Action Item: Residential Solar Program**

- **Results:** In Progress. With the completion of Community Choice Aggregation, the City is working with Roctricity on the next step- Community Solar.
- **Challenges:** Solar energy for residential homes is being underutilized in the Canandaigua community. There are lots of opportunities for growth, but education is needed.
- **Next Steps:** Work with Roctricity to help promote and support the program.

### **Action Item: EV Charging Stations**

- **Results:** In Progress. 1) Identify locations for successful implementation of Level 2 and 3 EV charging stations (aka electric vehicle service equipment EVSE) in Rochester and Finger Lakes regions 2) Determine present usefulness of existing area EVSE for power level (experienced as charging times), reliability and location with real-world work and

recreational experiences (three years ongoing data accumulation) 3) Making this information accessible and coherent to decision-makers.

- **Challenges:** Communication of EV charging needs and experiences to stakeholders in the EVSE build process, facilitate communications between grant providers, public and private property owners, current EV community. Promote infrastructure investment (primarily buried wire conduit) that will support higher current Level 3 charging stations in current public and private building projects.
- **Next Steps:** Determine a means to communicate and incentivize planning for EVSE needs to all stakeholders. Anticipate growing electric utility adoption of growing Vehicle to Grid (V2G) power transmission.

## **CSC Mission #2**

*Assess baseline conditions, establish goals and develop plans and suggest policies to achieve goals.*

### **Action Item: Municipal Solid Waste Audit**

- **Results:** Completed/In-Progress. The City partnered with Impact Earth to conduct a Municipal Solid Waste Audit on all seven municipal facilities; City Hall, Police Station, The Hurley Building, Fire Station #1, Fire Station #2, the Water Recovery Facility, and the Water Treatment Plant. The audit was conducted on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and September 18<sup>th</sup>, and found that the City was achieving a 36% landfill diversion rate with the vast majority of waste accounted for was not created through Municipal Operations, but brought in by Staff in the form of styrofoam coffee cups, takeout containers, pizza boxes, single-use cutlery, etc.
- **Challenges:** There were no challenges during the completion of the Municipal Solid Waste Audit- the only issue the team encountered was that two buildings tossed their waste too quickly requiring Impact Earth to come back in September. The real challenge will be in setting up systems and educating Staff to increase of landfill diversion rate by helping them address their personal habits and practices while at work. Hopefully, these steps will change not only their waste reduction practices on the job but in their personal lives. Additionally, COVID-19 delayed the roll-out of any new systems in 2020.
- **Next Steps:** The CSC will work with City Staff to identify and vet educational opportunities and policy changes that will help increase the City's landfill diversion rate. This will likely be an ongoing process to determine which approach is most sustainable, and will hinge on whether or not funding is available for composting in municipal facilities.

### **Action Item: Sustainable Solutions in the Comprehensive Plan-**

- **Results:** Completed. In 2019, the City appointed a committee made up of members of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, members of the public, supported by City staff to review the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Committee members updated existing green initiatives and made recommendations to integrate sustainability throughout. Policies included.
  - Public and alternative transit discussed in the transportation section
  - Natural resource protection included in Parks and environment sections
  - Green business discussed in the economy section
  - Local food system discussed under economy and downtown (farmers market, and buy local)
  - Smart growth land-use policies
  - Reaffirming recommendations of a separately developed complete street policy
  - Specific recognition of potential walking and bike trails to network local transportation alternatives.

- Integrated updated urban forestry recommendations from a standing tree advisory committee
- Updated Comprehensive Plan adopted by City Council in September 2020
- **Challenges:** While the specific recommendations widely accepted by the Committee and City Council, due in part to a volunteer lead comprehensive review the process took longer than initially expected.
- **Next Steps:** A key outcome of the adopted comprehensive plan was recommendation of an implementation committee to fully develop recommendations.

**Action Item: Community Choice Aggregation**

- **Results:** Completed. On October 7, 2020, the City executed a CCA supply contract with Source Power, for a 24-month fixed rate of \$0.04292 per kWh. Residents will begin to receive energy from 100% renewable sources January 1, 2021.
- **Challenges:** The real challenges with the program still lay ahead. Community Choice Aggregation is an “OPT-OUT” program, meaning that residents will need to actively remove themselves should they choose not to participate. The community outreach and information campaign may also pose challenges, but the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Administrator the City chooses will help with alleviating those concerns.
- **Next Steps:** Support the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party administrator to educate residents about Community Choice Aggregation.

**Action Item: Community Garden**

- **Result:** On Hold. After beginning to explore how successful community gardens in the area (such as Geneva Peeps) are organized and run, further reading of the Community Garden action item showed that it is currently as much about local municipal policies that prohibit/promote community agricultural projects as it is about actual gardens. This action item is also expected to change in 2020, so it was decided to wait for the new item changes before any more action or exploration is undertaken.
- **Challenges:** Figuring out how the Task Force can play a part in encouraging new City policy to promote targeted projects such as community gardens, garden stands, husbandry of poultry and livestock, beekeeping, creation of shared private or public spaces for mini-parks, composting, and other community projects that are climate smart.
- **Next Steps:** While waiting on the anticipated update to the Community Gardens action item, the City has promised a review of a local ordinance to check if it contains any roadblocks to community gardens or other useful community environmental and agricultural endeavors.

## CSC Mission #3

*Educate the community and stakeholders on the value of the goals and plans.*

### **Action Item: Green Vendor Fair**

- **Results:** Cancelled. CSC planned to host a Green Vendor Fair on March 28, 2020, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Canandaigua Primary/Elementary School LINK Gym. Unfortunately, COVID-19 deprived the community of a great opportunity for local green vendors to market themselves to our community, network with each other, and educate our community members about green products and services that are available locally. There were 30-40 vendors committed and willing to help support a shift to a local green economy.
- **Challenges:** COVID-19 cancelled the event.
- **Next Steps:** The CSC has begun work on a Virtual Green Vendor Fair Web-Series that will take the information that would have been available to residents at the Fair and put it online. This is a project the Task Force will work on in 2021.

### **Action Item: Solid Waste Reduction Mailer**

- **Results:** Completed. Using funds from Ontario County, the City has purchased refrigerator magnets that will be mailed out to every household in the City. In addition to the magnets, residents received a pamphlet of information about how to use the Town Transfer Station and what can or cannot be recycled there. The mailing went out in mid-August and was extremely well received by the community. There has been a noticeable uptick in the volume of certain items being recycled at the Transfer Station, and the mailing also attracted a new member to the Task Force.
- **Challenges:** The project was misquoted to begin with, so completing the project became challenging when we didn't have enough funding to complete the mailing. After some help from Ontario County and a fantastic vendor, we were able to complete the project.
- **Next Steps:** Distribute remaining magnets in New Home Owner Packets



### **Action Item: Arts and Music Festival**

- **Results:** Cancelled. The Task Force planned to a booth at the Downtown Arts and Music Festival in 2020 after a good response from residents and the broader community in 2019.
- **Challenges:** This year's event was cancelled due to COVID-19.
- **Next Steps:** Discuss attending next year and/or other downtown events.

### **Action Item: Facebook Page**

- **Results:** Completed/In Progress. A Facebook page for Climate Smart Canandaigua was created to be a place to educate the community and stakeholders on the value of the goals and plans, share environmental information, and promote local green events. To date, the page has garnered 373 followers with one post with a reach of 71,000 people, almost 11,000 engagements, and 787 shares.
- **Challenges:** Keeping the Facebook page active through volunteer time.
- **Next Steps:** Create a social media calendar to plan out seasonal posts and fill in with more timely posts as needed.

### **Action Item: Webpage**

- **Results:** Completed/In Progress. A webpage for Climate Smart Canandaigua was created on the City's Official website to be a place for information about meetings and meeting minutes and general Task Force information. As well as keep the public updated.
- **Challenges:** Keeping the webpage updated through volunteer time.
- **Next Steps:** Plot out a more cohesive way of keeping it more up to date.

## Looking Ahead to 2021

### Grants Studies

The Climate Smart Canandaigua Task Force plans to ask City Council to include the matching funds required to complete Government Operations and Community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventories, a Natural Resources Inventory, and a Climate Vulnerability Assessment. Every effort will be made to complete these studies, in conjunction with Impact Earth, as soon as possible.

### 2021 Planned Action Items

**CSC Task Force Member Recruitment Plan:** When the CSC Task Force was originally appointed, each member was appointed for a three (3) year term. With many of those appointments scheduled to expire at the end of 2021, the Task Force must develop a plan to recruit new members. In addition, having a recruitment plan in place will help identify individuals to fill CSC vacancies expeditiously should any sitting member need to resign prior to the end of their 3-year term. The goal is to have a full Task Force of 12 members, including the Chair as one of eleven (11) appointed members and a member of City Staff as the CSC Coordinator.

***Tentative Completion Date: Summer 2021***

**Government Operations GHG Inventory:** This inventory is an accounting, analysis, and report of the GHG emissions resulting from the day-to-day operations of our city. It will summarize the GHG emissions from the consumption of energy and materials in government buildings, from wastewater and water treatment facilities, from municipal vehicle fleets, from government-owned outdoor lighting, and other sources. It is a foundational step toward effective climate action and will provide the data needed to set realistic goals and track the CSC's progress.

***Tentative Completion Date: October 2021***

**Community GHG Inventory:** Government operations typically account for less than three percent of a community's emissions. It is therefore important to understand how our industries, businesses, schools, homes, and vehicles in our entire community are contributing to climate change. A Community GHG inventory provides the data needed to set realistic goals and track progress toward reducing costs, energy use, and emissions, allowing us to identify and focus on the most important sectors.

***Tentative Completion Date: October 2021***

**Natural Resource Inventory:** Maintaining the integrity and ecological health of natural areas is a key part of preventing the release of GHG emissions that are associated with development. The Natural Resources Inventory will give us a catalog of our local natural resources (both physical and biological) and provide a foundation for municipal land-use and conservation planning.

***Tentative Completion Date: September 2021***

**Climate Vulnerability Assessment:** Climate change will not affect a community equally. Performing a Climate Vulnerability Assessment, a comprehensive assessment of local vulnerabilities and risks related to climate change, will allow us to understand where to focus our local government staff and funding resources effectively and efficiently.

***Tentative Completion Date: October 2021***

**Virtual Green Vendor Fair:** After having to cancel our Green Vendor Fair on March 28, 2020, the group has started the process of engaging those vendors to participate in the Virtual Green Vendor Fair Web Series.

***Scheduled Date: Spring-Summer 2021***

**Composting in Municipal Facilities:** Work w/ Impact Earth to implement Waste Reduction Strategies in Municipal Buildings, including on-site composting

***Tentative Date: Early 2021***