



# Climate Task Force Meeting Summary

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Attendees:

Task Force members:

- Matthew Smith - Warren County Planning
- Lisa Adamson - Town of Queensbury and Warren County Climate Smart Task Force
- John Bowe - Warren County Cornell Cooperative Extension

- Jeff Flagg - Glens Falls Climate Smart Coordinator
- Scott Royael - Warren County Solid Waste & Recycling Compliance Coordinator

Other attendees:

- Diane Collins - North Country Earth Action)
- Dan Durkee - Warren County Public Health
- Ethan Gaddy - Warren County Planning
- Josh Dranoff - Capital District Regional Planning Commission

- Theresa Hajos - Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Elliot Lear - Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. with introductions.

## Composting Pilot and Municipal Culvert Inventory

Scott Royael gave an update about the Composting Pilot project. The project is moving forward, the site will be the Toney Pit and will include 100 households for household waste as well as some businesses that wish to participate. The Toney Pit is an existing County-owned storage site in Warrensburg. He also mentioned the NY Food Scraps Law which mandates organizations producing a certain tonnage of food waste to send that food waste to composting sites within a 25-mile radius if available. Scott said over the next 4 years, the threshold of tonnage of food scraps produced by businesses that must be sent to composting sites within a

25-mile radius will be lowered gradually. Scott stated that he expects more businesses locally to fall into this category, and the Pilot will be important to understand the readiness to intake food scraps and create compost.

Matthew Smith then briefly gave an overview of the Municipal Culvert Inventory project. The County has partnered with the towns to provide them with a culvert inventory of municipally owned culverts in high risk flood areas according to the Hazard Mitigation Plan. This project aims to help provide a GIS-based database of high-risk culverts for Highway Departments to use for emergency repairs, capital planning, and grant applications for physical work. Matthew Smith indicated the project had not started yet.

- Composting Pilot is moving along and should be under contract soon
- Municipal Culvert Inventory will take some time to begin as contract development has not started

## Warren County Climate Crosswalk

Matthew Smith talked about the Climate Crosswalk developed last year which aligns County, Regional, and State goals and strategies surrounding climate action. Using the County Comprehensive Plan's Climate related goals, strategies, and actions, the County Crosswalk shows the opportunities to pursue Comprehensive Plan actions and support regional goals and state climate smart goals to receive points. The crosswalk will also help coordination between the task force and the Environmental Concerns Committee by clearly providing actions the task force can pursue that directly support the County and advance our standing in the Climate Smart Communities Program. The Warren County Climate Crosswalk will be sent out with the meeting summary.

- Warren County Climate Crosswalk will be a foundational tool moving forward for the task force as it provides a list of actions that are both goals for Warren County and actions within the Climate Smart Communities Program that are eligible to increase our points in the program.

## Collaboration with Other Task Forces

The group then discussed opportunities to collaborate between municipal climate smart task forces in Lake George, Queensbury, and Glens Falls, as well as the County's role as a task force. Josh Dranoff provided an example from Columbia County where they jointly work on actions that the County and municipalities can receive points for to advance the whole County in the Climate Smart Task Force Program. Future coordination for joint projects that will provide points for all task forces in Warren County was also discussed and Matthew Smith said he will reach out to other Climate Smart Coordinators to discuss opportunities. Increasing visibility and support through social media was agreed to be a viable strategy to be pursued by the County to ensure existing climate or environmental events are as visible as possible.

Josh Dranoff brought up an opportunity called the Land Use Leadership Alliance which is a three-day training to gather Capital District climate leaders to discuss strategies and actions that have been successful to address climate change's effects on municipalities. The LULA is organized by PACE Law Center and will take place on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> at the Hideaway at Saratoga Lake in Saratoga Springs. The group supported Matthew Smith's attendance and

requested he provide a summary of the event to the other climate smart task forces in Warren County.

The group discussed energy prices and ways to provide support to the County and municipalities surrounding energy. Energy audits were previously done by ANCA and the group agreed there is a big opportunity to assist facilitation of energy audits to help municipalities understand their energy prices. An energy literacy workshop was also discussed for the public so people can better understand their energy bills.

- Opportunities for Climate Smart Task Forces to partner with each other to jointly work on actions that provide points to all task forces
- County Climate Smart Task Force can support Lake George, Queensbury, and Glens Falls Climate Smart Task Forces by promoting their events and should promote existing climate-related and environmental events
- Matthew Smith will attend the Land use Leadership Alliance (LULA) Program and provide a summary to the group
- Energy prices are a topical issue and energy audits and an energy literacy workshop are possible ways to support municipalities and the public

## Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Matthew Smith then brought up the topic of funding opportunities for projects that the task force can pursue. Josh Dranoff mentioned the Climate Smart Communities Program which is the dedicated program funding for Climate Smart Communities Program. Also, the Clean Energy Communities Program was brought up as a possible funding source. Currently, the Clean Energy Communities Program is closed but will reopen in a few months meaning the County has an opportunity to receive additional funding for actions that we complete related to that program. John Bowe mentioned the USDA Rural Development Fund which could possibly be a funding source for weatherization projects at government facilities.

- Funding opportunities include the Climate Smart Communities Grant Program, the Clean Energy Communities Program which has funding attached to completing certain actions, the USDA Rural Development Fund for possible upgrades to municipal buildings.

## Annual Maintenance

Matthew Smith discussed the plan to maintain the Climate Smart Communities Application including the actions and points. Matthew Smith explained some actions are expired or will expire and planning for annual or biennial maintenance to ensure actions are kept up to date for the next certification date of 2030 will ease the next certification process. He stated he will work with Josh Dranoff and try to include the group in gathering the necessary documentation to bring expired or expiring actions up to date.

- Matthew Smith will develop plan for application maintenance to bring expired or expiring actions back up to date

## Progress Tracking

To understand the progress and successes of the Climate Smart Task Force, Matthew Smith posed the question of how do we measure success. There was a conversation around public

engagement and tying success to the public being aware of what the group is working on. There was talk about how to ensure people are aware which included social media, promotion of existing events, partnering with existing organizations such as Cornell and Soil and Water Conservation District. Coordination with the Environmental Concerns Committee would also be a measure of success to provide updates and opportunities to direct the task force to pursue actions for the Climate Smart Communities Program and work towards Silver Certification.

- Public engagement including promotion of events, meetings, projects will be a measure of success
- Collaboration with other task forces and organizations will be a pathway to successful progress within the Climate Smart Communities Program
- Last year, the County Climate Smart Task Force coordinated with the Environmental Concerns committee and another year of coordination will be a measure of success.

### Next Steps:

- Attend Land Use Leadership Alliance Training Program and provide summary to group
- Promote and attend CDRPC Climate Action Webinar Series
- Work with Don Lehman to promote Environmental and Climate-related Events in Warren County
- Reach out to Warren County's three Climate Smart Task Forces to gauge interest in a collaborative project that all four task forces could gain points for
- Gather more information about energy audits and a possible energy literacy workshop

Prepared by Matthew Smith on 3/6/2026