

# Warren County Climate Smart Program

## 2019 Annual Report



Prepared by Warren County Planning Department

Photo Credit: Warren County Tourism

## **Global Climate Change Demands Local Climate Action**

For the past several decades, the scientific community has been warning about the potentially existential threat of global climate change. The discourse around this topic remains fraught with controversy. However, the evidence is clear that the global climate is rapidly changing, trending warmer. The results of a warming climate are anticipated to bring about changing weather patterns, such as more extreme rain events, warmer winters, and more frequent heat-waves. These changes will impact emergency preparedness, public health, infrastructure, among other aspects of our daily lives.

What our community can do is prepare and adapt to what is anticipated, as well as, curb greenhouse gas emissions through cost-saving energy efficiency improvements.

### **Key Terms**

*Weather* - The state of the atmosphere at a place and time, as regards heat, dryness, sunshine, wind, rain, etc.

*Climate* - Weather conditions prevailing in an area over a long period of time

*Greenhouse Effect* - Trapping of the sun's warmth in a planet's lower atmosphere, due to the greater transparency of the atmosphere to visible radiation from the sun than to infrared radiation emitted from the planet's surface

*Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions* - Gases in the atmosphere such as water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that can absorb infrared radiation, trapping heat in the atmosphere.

### **Climate Smart Communities Program**

The New York State Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Program was first introduced in 2009 to provide local governments with guidance and funding to undertake local actions to mitigate the contribution of greenhouse gas emissions and adapt local infrastructure and operations to the impacts of global climate change.

The CSC Program has identified several actions communities can voluntarily undertake to receive credit towards certification of their local program. In 2019, Warren County became a “Registered” Climate Smart Community. Through the successful completion of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience to climate change, Warren County expects to earn Bronze, Silver, or Gold Certification Status.

Aside from providing the community with a positive example of sustainable practices, receiving Climate Smart Certification status provides communities with improved opportunities on funding applications to implement energy efficiency and climate adaptation projects.

## Climate Smart Task Force

Climate change is a threat that is likely to impact all sectors of our community. To develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for embracing these changes, Warren County has assembled a diverse group of both County and non-County employees. The Task Force is composed of 17 individuals and is coordinated by the Assistant County Planner, Chris Belden.

WARREN COUNTY CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE		
Name	Title	Organization
Chris Belden, AICP	Climate Smart Coordinator/Assistant County Planner	Warren County Planning Department
Sara Frankenfeld	GIS Administrator	Warren County Planning Department
Amanda Beck	Junior Planner	Warren County Planning Department
Beth Gilles	Director	Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning
Allison Gaddy, AICP	Senior Planner	Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning
Jim Lieberum, CPESC	District Manager/Hazard Mitigation Coordinator	Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District
Amy Drexel, AEM	Emergency Services Coordinator	Warren County Emergency Services
Ed Doughney, PE	Senior Civil Engineer	Warren County DPW
Dan Durkee	Senior Health Educator	Warren County Public Health
Tammie DeLorenzo	Assistant to the County Administrator	Warren County Administrator
Jack Mance, AICP	Senior Transportation Planner	Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council
Dan Barusch	Director of Planning & Zoning	Town/Village of Lake George
Scott Royael	Sustainability Coordinator	SUNY Adirondack
Claudia Braymer	County Supervisor, Glens Falls – Ward 3	Warren County Board of Supervisors
Peter McDevitt	County Supervisor, Glens Falls – Ward 2	Warren County Board of Supervisors
Andrea Hogan	Town Supervisor, Johnsbury	Warren County Board of Supervisors
Doug Beaty	At-Large Supervisor, Queensbury	Warren County Board of Supervisors

## Climate Smart Accomplishments | 2019

June 24, 2019 |

Warren County adopts Climate Smart Communities Pledge

Warren County earns designation as Registered Climate Smart Community

*This designation demonstrates a commitment by county leadership to advance actions that mitigate influencing factors of global climate change and reduce their anticipated impacts.*

July 19, 2019 |

Warren County Board of Supervisors adds “Green Fleet Policy” to County Fleet Policy.

*Requires Departments to consider purchase of “fuel efficient, electric, or hybrid vehicles”.*

July 26, 2019 |

Warren County Planning Department submits an application to undertake several key climate mitigation and adaptation actions, including:

1. Natural Resource Inventory
2. Fleet Inventory
3. Climate Vulnerability Assessment
4. Climate Smart Resiliency Planning
5. Climate Adaptation Strategies
6. Heat Emergency Plan

Summer of 2019 |

Warren County Fire Prevention & Building Codes:

- Staff completes Energy Code Enforcement Training
- Adopts NYS Unified Solar Permit Application

August 16, 2019 |

Warren County creates and appoints members to the Climate Smart Task Force

August 16, 2019 |

Warren County Board of Supervisors authorizes agreement with Energize NY - Open C-PACE.

*This agreement will allow businesses in Warren County to enjoy low cost financing for energy efficiency improvements.*

September 2019 |

Warren County Planning works with IT to launch [www.warrencountyny.gov/climate](http://www.warrencountyny.gov/climate)

October 15, 2019 |

Warren County Climate Smart Task Force - First Meeting

*Discussed the program and identified actions to undertake.*

December 19, 2019 |

Regional Economic Development Council Awards announcement. Application is not awarded.

December 20, 2019 |

Warren County Board of Supervisors adopts Building Energy Benchmarking Requirement

December 2019 |

Warren County installs 5 dual-port charging stations for use by employees and the public.

## Next Steps | 2020 and Beyond

Warren County will continue 2020 with an ambitious list of actions to accomplish and expects to submit an application to receive Bronze Certification Status by April 2020. Below is Warren County's Climate Agenda for 2020. Additionally, below is a listing of the actions Warren County has completed or intends to complete in 2020 and 2021.

### 2020 Warren County Climate Agenda

Actions that Warren County intends to implement will be in pursuance of the following:

1. Reduce energy use and emissions of greenhouse gases
2. Save taxpayer dollars
3. Improve operations and infrastructure
4. Increase quality of life

### Certification Actions | Completed

- Establish a Climate Smart Task Force
- Appoint Climate Smart Task Force
- Energy Code Enforcement Training (Building Department)
- Adoption of NYS Unified Solar Permit Application
- Alternative Fuel Infrastructure
- Commercial Building Energy Efficiency Financing Program (Open C-PACE)
- Create Local Climate Action Website
- Regional Bike & Pedestrian Plan (2014)
- Watershed Assessment (Champlain Watershed)
- Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- Climate Adaptation Strategies
- Energy Benchmarking Requirement for Government Buildings (Policy)
- Geothermal Installation
- Implement Strategies that Increase Public Transit Ridership and Alternative Transport Modes
- Floodplain Restoration

### Certification Actions | In-Process

- Government Building Energy Audits
- Energy Benchmarking Requirement for Government Buildings (Implementation)
- Brownfield Clean-Up & Redevelopment
- Watershed Assessment (Upper Hudson River Watershed)

### Certification Actions | Work Plan: Policies

- Complete Streets Policy
- Shade Structures in Public Places
- Policies that Support Farmers Markets, Community Gardens, Urban/Rural Agriculture
- Develop Financing Mechanism for Future Government Energy Efficiency or Renewable Energy Projects
- Partnerships with Other Entities
- Adopt Natural Resource Inventory through a Local Law

## Next Steps | 2020 and Beyond

### Certification Actions | Work Plan: Plans & Reports

- Social Media
- Annual Progress Report
- Fleet Inventory
- Natural Resource Inventory
- Renewable Energy Feasibility Study (Floyd Bennett Airport)
- Heat Emergency Plan
- Climate Smart Resiliency Vision & Plan
- Government Operations GHG Inventory
- Government Operations Climate Action Plan

### Funding

Warren County will work collaboratively with its local and regional partners to identify appropriate funding sources to complete priority projects.

### More Information

For those looking to learn more about the efforts of Warren County to become more resilient to climate change visit:

- [www.warrencountyny.gov/climate](http://www.warrencountyny.gov/climate)
- [www.facebook.com/warrencountyplanning/](https://www.facebook.com/warrencountyplanning/)

Or contact:

Chris Belden, AICP  
Assistant County Planner  
Warren County Planning Department  
(518) 761-6553