

# Climate Smart Communities Profile



City of Albany

March 2014

## Program Overview

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program is a New York State initiative to help local communities reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, prepare for effects of climate change and save taxpayers money. The program is designed to address 10 focus areas, or "pledge elements," outlined in the CSC Pledge: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/53013.html>.

New York State is offering technical support to communities that have adopted the CSC Pledge. This profile provides a stepping stone for identifying a technical support service package to help the City of Albany progress through the 10 pledge elements (see below).

Detailed information on actions completed, in progress, and identified for future action is provided in the tables on the following pages. If a table is missing for a particular pledge element, it means that the CSC program does not have a record of actions taken to address that element.

### Local Government Facts:

**Adopted Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Pledge:** 2009

**CSC Pledge Elements Addressed:** 10 out of 10

**Total Actions Completed:** 25

**Government Type:** City

**County:** Albany County

**Region:** Capital District

**Population:** 97,856

### Climate Smart Communities Pledge Elements:

1. *Pledge to Combat Climate Change by Becoming a Climate Smart Community*
2. *Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action*
3. *Decrease Energy Demand for Local Government Operations*
4. *Encourage Renewable Energy for Local Government Operations*
5. *Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate Smart Solid Waste Management Practices*
6. *Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Tools*
7. *Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change*
8. *Support a Green Innovation Economy*
9. *Inform and Inspire the Public*
10. *Commit to an Evolving Process*

## Pledge Element 1: Pledge to Combat Climate Change by Becoming a Climate Smart Community

Action	Status	Description
Sustainability Working Group	Completed	The Sustainability Working Group consists of City staff and meets regularly to identify ways to reduce energy consumption across government operations.
Adopted CSC Pledge	Completed	The City of Albany passed the CSC pledge in spring 2009.
Sustainability Advisory Committee	In progress	The City will be replacing its internal Sustainability Working Group and external Community Advisory Committee with a new, formally legislated, Sustainability Advisory Committee. This committee will report to the Common Council and will include City Department Heads, as well as Mayoral Appointees and Council Appointees from the community.
Sustainability Ambassadors	Completed	Ambassadors are appointed by the Department heads and work to identify and implement methods for making their departments more sustainable.
Community Advisory Committee	Completed	The Community Advisory Committee on Sustainability was formed by Mayor Jennings and the Office of Energy and Sustainability in 2011 to provide advice and feedback on the climate change component of Albany's comprehensive plan.

## Pledge Element 2: Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action

Action	Status	Description
Community GHG Inventory	Completed	In 2010, Albany created a GHG inventory for the baseline year 2009. It included both government and community GHG emissions. In 2013, the City is updating its government inventory for 2010, 2011, and 2012. For the community inventory, it the City will utilize results of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory (2010 baseline).
Community Climate Action Plan	Completed	A Climate Action Plan was created and included in Albany's Comprehensive Plan and was adopted by the Albany Common Council in 2012.
Government GHG Inventory	Completed	In 2010, Albany created a GHG inventory for the baseline year 2009. It included both government and community GHG emissions. In 2013, the City is updating its government inventory for 2010, 2011, and 2012. For the community inventory, it the City will utilize results of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory (2010 baseline).

## Pledge Element 2: Set Goals, Inventory Emissions, Move to Action

Action	Status	Description
Community and Government GHG Reduction Target	Completed	The City of Albany adopted community and government GHG reduction targets for 2030 (using 2009 baseline) as part of the Albany 2030 Plan. Targets include a 10% reduction in Commercial, Residential, and Industrial emissions, a 20% reduction in community VMT, a 65% solid waste diversion rate, a 10% reduction in emissions from wastewater treatment, a 25% reduction in emissions from City buildings, a 15% renewable energy goal for City energy, a 10% alternative vehicles goal for municipal fleet.
Government Operations Climate Action Plan	Completed	A Climate Action Plan was created and included in Albany's Comprehensive Plan and was adopted by the Albany Common Council in 2012.

## Pledge Element 3: Decrease Energy Demand for Local Government Operations

Action	Status	Description
Energy Master Plan	In progress	With funding from and coordination by the New York Power Authority (NYPA), the City will be completing an Energy Master Plan addressing opportunities for enhanced energy efficiency in buildings, infrastructure, transportation systems, as well as for renewable energy. Included in this process will be ASHRAE Level 1 audits of the City's least efficient and highest consuming municipal buildings.
Green Purchasing Policy	In progress	The green purchasing policy is pending final approval from the Mayor's Office. As of Sept 2013, City is considering updates to the policy prior to seeking approval from the incoming administration.
Staff Training on Energy Conservation Policy	Completed	The City of Albany has adopted an Energy Conservation Policy and has trained employees on the new policies and procedures.

## Pledge Element 4: Encourage Renewable Energy for Local Government Operations

Action	Status	Description
'Rentricity' Hydrokinetic Generator Feasibility Study	Completed	The City completed a feasibility study for a hydrokinetic generator to be installed at the water department.
'Rentricity' Hydrokinetic Generator Phase 2 Feasibility Study	In progress	The City has received a grant from NYSERDA and has released a RFP for the second phase of its 'Rentricity' Hydrokinetic generator feasibility study, to include monitoring equipment.
Renewable Energy Installations on City Properties	In progress	The City issued an RFP in October of 2013 for the design, installation, and commissioning of renewable energy systems at City of Albany Land - Coeymans, Dept of General Services and at the Loudonville Reservoir.

## Pledge Element 5: Realize Benefits of Recycling and Other Climate Smart Solid Waste Management Practices

Action	Status	Description
Yard Waste Program	Completed	The City of Albany offers weekly curbside yard waste pick up. Residents also can receive free mulch from the City compost facility.
Expand Waste Diversion and Reduction Efforts	Identified	The City's Climate Action Plan seeks ways to further reduce waste generation and divert waste from the landfill. Proposed strategies include Pay-As-You-Throw programs, creating a green demolition program, and expanding the organics diversion program.
Recycling Program	Completed	The City of Albany offers single stream recycling to all residents and employees.
Employee Recycling	Completed	The City of Albany offers single stream recycling in municipal offices. Internal sustainability ambassadors have been trained on the recycling program and have distributed appropriate materials to all departments.

## Pledge Element 6: Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Tools

Action	Status	Description
Bicycle Signage and Wayfinding Strategy	Completed	The City of Albany worked with CDTC and Alta Planning + Design on a strategy and implementation plan for citywide bicycle signage and wayfinding. This plan was created in conjunction with the Bike Share Feasibility Study and was completed in June 2013.
Intermodal Transit Center	Identified	The City's Climate Action Plan seeks to create "an Intermodal Transit Center (regional / local bus service) with connections to the Rensselaer Amtrak Station and Albany International Airport."
Multi-Modal Transit Options	Identified	The City's Climate Action Plan seeks to promote multi-modal and hybrid/electric transit options. It also seeks to increase connectivity between neighborhoods.
Urban Forestry Program	Identified	The City's Climate Action Plan seeks to develop and implement an urban forestry program. The City applied for funds from USFS to update the tree canopy inventory to look at urban heat island effect and adaptability of current tree canopy. Unfortunately the City did not receive these funds and the program is on hold until funding becomes available.
Bicycle Master Plan	Completed	The City of Albany has completed and begun to implement a 20 year bicycle master plan.

## Pledge Element 6: Promote Climate Protection Through Community Land Use Tools

Action	Status	Description
Electric Vehicle Feasibility Study	Completed	The City received a cost share research agreement from NYSERDA and NYDOT to conduct a feasibility study on installing electric vehicle charging stations. The study assessed ways to incorporate electric vehicles into the municipal fleet and identified zoning or policy changes to better accommodate electric vehicle infrastructure.
Bike Share Feasibility Study	Completed	The City of Albany worked with CDTC and Alta Planning + Design on a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a bike share program in Albany. This plan was created in conjunction with the Bicycle Signage and Wayfinding Strategy and was completed in June 2013.
Develop and Implement a Complete Streets Policy	Completed	On June 3, 2013, the City's Common Council adopted the Complete Streets policy (Ordinance 2.11.13 - replacement of Article VI of Chapter 323 of City Code). The policy calls for guidelines and implementation plan, which are now in the early stages. If the City receives Cleaner Greener Communities implementation funds, urban design codification will interplay with this effort.
Transit Oriented Development Guidebook	Completed	The City developed a Transit Oriented Development Guidebook that was completed in January 2013.

## Pledge Element 7: Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change

Action	Status	Description
North Swan Street Green Infrastructure Project	In progress	The North Swan Street Park is designed to improve existing infrastructure with green initiatives, which are consistent with the EPA's Green Project Reserve. The goal is to reduce impervious cover by at least 25% by increasing permeable pavers, bioretention, soil restoration and decompaction, vegetated swales and tree plantings. This reduction would qualify the project under NYSDEC's redevelopment criteria for Water Quality Treatment and Runoff Reduction. Completion of the park is currently anticipated for 2014.
Quail Street Complete Streets Project	In progress	The Quail Street Green Streets Project is located in the Albany Education District between Madison and Central Avenue. This project will incorporate green infrastructure improvements into a streetscape upgrade. This "green street" project will utilize bioretention, permeable pavement, and other green infrastructure methods to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality.
State Street Green Infrastructure Project	In progress	The City of Albany is implementing a green infrastructure project that includes retrofitting portions of the sidewalk with bioretention areas, or rain gardens, to treat stormwater runoff from sidewalks and roadways. The State Street green infrastructure project is expected to be completed in 2013.

## Pledge Element 7: Plan for Adaptation to Unavoidable Climate Change

Action	Status	Description
Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan	Completed	Albany's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Adaptation Plan builds off of the NYSERDA ClimAID report by analyzing how climate change could affect Albany's people, infrastructure and natural resources and providing recommendations and strategies on how to improve the city's resilience and adaptive capacity.

## Pledge Element 8: Support a Green Innovation Economy

Action	Status	Description
City of Albany Green Business Program	In progress	The City of Albany Green Business Program is a voluntary partnership between business leaders, government agencies and nonprofit organizations to improve overall efficiency, save money, and reduce their environmental footprint as a means to creating a more sustainable Albany. The City is currently working with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) on developing national standards for green business certification.
Residential Energy Efficiency Program or PACE Program	Identified	In its Climate Action Plan, the City identified creating a residential energy efficiency program or a PACE program as a strategy to reduce GHG emissions.
Energy Matching Grant	Completed	The City used their remaining EECBG funding to create an energy matching grant program for local businesses to provide incentives for them to make energy efficiency improvements. <a href="http://www.albanyny.org/Files/EnergyEfficiencyConservationBlockGrantSmallBusinessProgram3912.pdf">http://www.albanyny.org/Files/EnergyEfficiencyConservationBlockGrantSmallBusinessProgram3912.pdf</a>

## Pledge Element 9: Inform and Inspire the Public

Action	Status	Description
Website and Social media	Completed	The City of Albany has a sustainability website at <a href="http://www.albanysustainability.org">www.albanysustainability.org</a> as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts.
Neighborhood Energy Challenge	Completed	This program allows Albany residents to challenge each other to make homes and neighborhoods more energy efficient. Residents take a home energy assessment and then make upgrades based on the recommendations. The neighborhood with the highest percentage of participating homes receives a green enhancement package. <a href="http://www.greencapitalregion.org">www.greencapitalregion.org</a>

## Pledge Element 10: Commit to an Evolving Process

Action	Status	Description
Capital Region Sustainability Plan	Completed	Albany was the lead coordinator for the Capital District Regional Sustainability Plan under the Cleaner, Greener Communities program. <a href="http://sustainablecapitalregion.org/">http://sustainablecapitalregion.org/</a>
STAR Community Index Pilot Community	In progress	The City of Albany is a pilot community for the STAR Community Index and will be recognized as one of the first cities to be rated for its sustainability efforts using the index.

**For more information about the City of Albany's climate protection efforts, please contact: Kate Lawrence at (518) 434-2532**



The Climate Smart Communities Program is jointly sponsored by six New York State Agencies: the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Health, Department of Transportation, and Public Service Commission.