

Village of Rhinebeck

Annual Climate Progress Report 2022

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INTRODUCTION

2022: what was it like? Back to normal? The COVID-19 pandemic seems to be mostly behind us—or at least we’ve become accustomed to how to live with it. Maybe back to a new normal. We saw the federal government finally act on the reality of climate change with the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act. New York State finalized its CLCPA Scoping Plan and voters passed an Environmental Bond Act. There is hope, and a lot of curiosity, about how these pieces will shape and fund climate projects here at the local level.

In the Village of Rhinebeck, we are proud to have finished significant projects in 2022. We did a huge push to engage the public with our first Rhinebeck Climate Week in September. We delivered the Rhinebeck Natural Resources Inventory in May after over a year of work. In January of 2022, we announced a municipal food scraps diversion pilot, and by March, we had 100 households signed up. The compost pilot finished up in December, capped with some good news. The Village has been awarded a \$200,000 grant towards the funding of a municipal compost facility. (At the time of writing this, we’re waiting to hear if we also got a \$100,000 grant from a foundation to help us with the match.)

With these projects and more under our belt, we are still working our way towards silver certification in the NY State Climate Smart Communities program.

OUR PEOPLE POWER

Our volunteers and the structure of our work

We thank the volunteers who have put countless hours into the Village's CSC projects. We are also happy to continue to partner with Marist College's Environmental Science and Policy program and Computer Engineering department. We also worked with the Village Tree Commission on a major Norway Maple removal and fall tree planting along Montgomery St. Hudson River Estuary Program funded a project manager and a Dutchess County Cornell Cooperative Extension GIS expert for our NRI work with the Town of Rhinebeck and Hyde Park.

The Climate Smart Communities program is a NY State program requiring a municipality to work within their own level of government. That is why we have a Village CSC Task Force. Trustee Bertozzi is now on the Town's CSC task force, as they pursue their bronze certification. The Town is currently looking for more volunteers to help with their CSC efforts. We had a major collaboration with the Town on our Joint Natural Resources Inventory. We also collaborate with the Town on piloting a salt brine program for winter road treatments.

Rhinebeck Village Climate Smart Community Task Force

Core active members:

Vanessa Bertozzi (Coordinator)

Mayor Gary Bassett

Angela Basile

Aurore Stanek

Carli Fraccarolli

Christopher Tavener

Corinna Borden

Dorna Schroeter

Katherine Killeffer

Scout Pronto Breslin

Jennifer Breslin

Lawrence Miller

Liz Roth

Mary Burns

Michael Forlenza

Our larger CSC Task Force moved to meeting quarterly, while our Compost Subcommittee met weekly and our NRI subcommittee met at least once a month through the spring.

2022 PROGRESS

This chart shows the projects we're working on and their status as we work towards silver.

Project	Progress	CSC points
Bronze	Completed	131
Annual Progress Report	Completed	4
Followed by ~350 on social media Instagram & FB	Completed	3
Updates for CSC website	Completed	3
Sent monthly email newsletters (190 subscribers)	Completed	
Continued to plant trees and manage our urban forest	Completed	
Piloted salt brine / road salt reduction	Completed	
Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy	Completed	4
Green Infrastructure Project Feasibility Plan	Completed	2
Hosted CSC Public Events	Completed	3
LED Streetlights	Completed	8
Energy Code Enforcement Training	Completed	5
Adopt NY Stretch Energy Code	Proposed	10
Composting Waste Water Treatment Plant sludge (innovative action?)	Completed	6
CAPI GHG inventory	Postponed	16
CAPI Climate Action Plan	Postponed	12
Compost Feasibility Study	Completed	4
Natural Resources Inventory	Completed	10
FlexTech Energy Assessment for Village Hall	Completed	10
VRF heat pump heating/cooling for Village Hall	Proposed	9
Compost drop-off pilot	Completed	2
Strategy to establish a municipally-run food waste recycling facility (e.g., anaerobic digestion or large-scale composting)	In progress	2
Municipal drop off compost facility	Proposed	4
Banned spraying glyphosate on municipal property	Completed	
Safe Routes to School	Proposed	8
Landsman Kill research w/Marist	Completed	
Riparian buffer plantings s/Marist & Trees for Tribes	Completed	2

Energy Benchmarking for Government Buildings Policy	Completed	2
Energy Benchmarking for Government Buildings Public Report	Completed	2
Drinking water: Emergency Oil Spill Drill w/Coastguard	Postponed	
Fleet efficiency policy	Proposed	3
Community Campaign for Clean Heating and Cooling and Energy Efficiency	Proposed	3
Expand and improve bike/walking paths, bike lanes, and sidewalks	Proposed	3
Improve bike parking	Proposed	2
Community GHG Inventory	Proposed	16
Community Climate Action Plan	Proposed	16
Comprehensive Plan w/Sustainability Elements	In progress	18
(2020) Launched Energy Navigators	Completed	5
(2020) Installed EV charging stations in muni lot	Completed	6
(2020) Resiliency Planning Tool	Completed	6
(2020) Climate Vulnerability Assessment	Completed	6
TOTAL CSC points path to silver @ 300		341

We earned 131 with bronze certification. We are working on projects in progress, completed, or planned. We have identified projects to propose, and that would get us 210 additional points. We need 300 points total to get to silver—but you want some wiggle room with your submission, and some of these projects may not be feasible soon. We’d like to get to silver in January 2025. Certification expires after 5 years, so our bronze will have lapsed in March 2025. With the update process for the Village’s Comprehensive Plan, we hope to better understand which of these actions our community thinks should be the highest priority. The CAPI process will also be very helpful in understanding the biggest impacts related to energy.

For a user-friendly summary of actions completed towards silver Climate Smart Communities filing, see this webpage:

www.climatesmartrhinebeck.org/our-silver-certification

For what we did for bronze:

www.climatesmartrhinebeck.org/our-bronze-certification

PROJECTS

Rhinebeck Climate Week 2022

2022 was the year we went big with the first ever Rhinebeck Climate Week. Task force member Angela Basile led the planning of a week's worth of public events, with something happening each day during September 18 - 25. We collaborated with Starr Library, Winnakee Land Trust, Upstate Films, Rhinebeck Farmers' Market, and even helped high school teacher Sarah Wheeler receive a Rhinebeck Science Foundation grant. Events included our annual Bike/Walk to School Day on International Car Free Day, a screening of Youth v. Gov at Upstate Films, a climate careers panel discussion at Starr Library, an e-bikes demo, a compost give-away, and more. We did 16 additional [public events](#) in 2022, including presenting at The Rhinebeck Science Foundation's Discovery Festival, Thriving in Rhinebeck, the Rhinebeck Rotary Club, and Vassar Lifelong Learning Institute.

We've summarized 2022 projects below into themes:

Policy, Water, Energy, Resiliency, and Reducing Waste & Emissions.

POLICY

Comprehensive Plan Update with Sustainability Elements

The Comprehensive Plan Committee and its subcommittees have been working incredibly hard throughout 2022 to compile recommendations and engage the public for input. In May, the Climate Smart Rhinebeck Task Force, led by high schooler Scout Pronto and her mother Jennifer Breslin, developed a workshop for youth called [Rhinebeck 2042](#), where students did a future visioning exercise, a walking assessment of the Village, and [proposed recommendations for the comp plan](#) which were then shared out at community workshops. There were many recommendations focused on ecological and climate issues. We were assisted by a landscape designer Karine Duteil and planner Cynthia Nikitin from L and N Landscape Design. During September's Climate Week, the task force worked with the students to implement a "[tactical urbanism](#)" [intervention](#)—a demonstration of Safe Routes to School measures to encourage less dependence on cars including chalk-spray painted crosswalks and traffic cone sidewalks. The Task Force hopes to continue this work in the 2023 New Year with a collaborative elective with middle school teacher Henry Frischknecht.

In addition to this student-led work, the task force delivered a memo to the Comp Plan Committee at the outset of the comp plan process and a set of climate-related recommendations to the subcommittees in the fall of 2022.

WATER

To protect our drinking water and move towards a beneficial relationship with our watershed and ecosystem.

Hudson 7

Mayor Gary Bassett is Chair of this seven municipality consortium. Town Supervisor Elizabeth Spinzia is also a member. In addition to advocating for the protection of drinking water, the group works with other organizations on disaster management and Drinking Source Water Protection for the Seven Hudson Communities of Towns of Esopus, Hyde Park and Lloyd, the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, and the Town and Village of Rhinebeck where they review programs and policies to protect drinking water supplies. The following is excerpted from Chair Bassett's annual Hudson 7 update.

2022 marked the council's fourth successful year focused on issues with impacts to the Hudson River that include:

- *Working proactively with the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) developers to mitigate any negative impacts to drinking water during the installation of a power cable in the riverbed. In the fall of 2022, pilot testing was conducted during a jet plow exercise simulating one of the Hudson 7's drinking water intakes. The Hudson 7's technical advisory team is currently analyzing the data from this exercise.*
- *Due to our ongoing advocacy, the Central Hudson Coal tar removal project was put on hold to overhaul its process and eliminate all negative impacts to the Poughkeepsie' Water Treatment Facility.*
- *We launched a new project on the advancement of the salt front in the Hudson River due to climate change that received significant attention from all levels of government and government agencies.*
- *The Hudson 7 secured funding from all seven municipalities as well as Dutchess and Ulster Counties for a three-year commitment to help fund a Source Water Protection coordinator that will support our important work going forward.*

Road Salt Reduction

In December of 2022, we got an offer from Dave's Tree Service to sell us their used brining equipment for just \$2000. Town Highway Superintendent Bob Wyant agreed to sell the Village brine for 20 cents a gallon. As of writing this, the Village Board has voted to pursue this set up so we can start brining in the new year 2023.

ENERGY

To transition to a more efficient system with renewable sources.

Energy Benchmarking

In 2022, we published the Village's first energy benchmarking reports for the years 2020 and 2021, much delayed due to major billing issues from Central Hudson.

Flextech Energy Study

We worked with M/E Engineering and received \$5000 in NYSERDA FlexTech funds to pay for half of the completed energy efficiency study for Village Hall. M/E presented recommendations to the Village Board, and we identified:

1. Adding insulation to the roof and plugging air leakage in walls and outdated vents to better conserve energy
2. Replacing our fuel burning boiler and window AC units with a VRF heat pump system.

However, since asbestos is present in Village Hall, we also requested a proposal for a HAZMAT study to inform any future renovations.

RESILIENCY

To use nature-based solutions to adapt to irreversible oncoming climate change impacts that are most relevant to Rhinebeck: flooding, heat, and degradation of biodiversity.

Natural Resources Inventory

The Village, along with the Town of Rhinebeck and Town of Hyde Park, was lucky to receive free Natural Resources Inventory services from the Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County. We worked for over a year collaboratively. The project resulted in a Joint Rhinebeck Town and Village NRI, a set of 25 maps with an interpretive report. Typically, these projects are drawn upon in land use decision making, as with Planning Boards. Often, they lead to developing an Open Space Plan. In our case, the NRI has already been useful during the Comprehensive Planning process. The Village Board intends to formally adopt the NRI along with the completed new Comp Plan. We also framed the set of Village maps and hung them in Village Hall. We will be getting hard copies of the NRI report printed in 2023. Special thanks to NRI subcommittee members, Carli Fraccarolli, Dan Shapley, and Christopher Tavener.

Amphibian Migration

2022 was our second event centered on the DEC's call for folks to count and assist migrating amphibians as they make their way across roads to vernal pools for breeding each spring. While we don't receive CSC points for this activity, it's a wonderful community event. This year we collaborated with Winnakee Land Trust to highlight their Vlei Marsh property in addition to village-based locations. We also thank the Rhinebeck Village Police Department and Village and Town Highway Departments for their support during the event—which always happens on a dark and rainy night!

Study of the Landsman Kill

Our collaboration with Marist College students focuses on creating a predictive model to anticipate climate-induced more frequent and severe flooding on the Landsman Kill and Crystal Lake, as well as projects to reduce flooding. The collaboration proceeded January through May 2022 and then also Fall semester. Professor Richard Feldman's environmental science and public policy students and Professor Chris Algozzine's computer science students analyzed data from the installed sensor in the Landsman Kill behind the Highway Garage. For the spring semester, the students presented to the Village Board and for the fall semester, Mayor Bassett and I, Trustee Bertozzi, visited the class for their final presentations.

REDUCING WASTE & EMISSIONS

To drawdown our greenhouse gasses and take responsibility for our effluent and trash.

CAPI Dutchess

Both Town and Village were accepted as two of nine municipalities in Dutchess County to participate in a program led by Hudson Valley Regional Council and ICLEI. The goal of the program is to guide the cohort through a Greenhouse Gas Inventory process and create a climate action plan. Unfortunately, the project's state funding was delayed by the COVID budget freeze, but happily it is slated to start in January of 2023.

Composting Pilot

In December of 2021, the Village Board unanimously approved subsidizing a 100 household drop-off compost pilot, which we announced in the 2022 New Year. Food scrap collection with The O Zone started in March 2022 and ran for 10 months through December (with an extension past its initial end-date of August 31). The pilot was called *Village Compost: A Village of Rhinebeck Program*. We applied for a DEC grant for municipal composting programs in September, and as of Christmastime, we received word that we have been awarded \$200,000 for the construction of a municipal composting facility at the Highway Department property. We are awaiting word from the non-profit Partners for Climate Action to see if we will receive

additional funding for the Village's side of the match. The Compost Subcommittee worked tirelessly, meeting weekly for over a year, scavenging used plastic buckets to give to pilot participants (thank you Task Force member Dorna Schroeter) and sharing inspiring tips and info on social media (thank you Task Force Aurore Stanek). Task Force member Katherine Killeffer lent her graphic design skills to create a brand and educational materials. We are also grateful to our restaurant and business partners who are continuing to pay their own commercial contracts with The O Zone (Samuel's, Terrapin, Aba's, Sunflower Market, Bread Alone, Market St, The Amsterdam, All That Java, JSA Sustainable Wealth Management/Longwave and Upstate Films). 120 households of the Woods condos have seen their HOA pay for their own bins (thanks to Task Force member Liz Roth), with The Gardens condos hopefully following suit (thanks for Task Force member Mary Burns). Post-pilot, we have 36 households continuing to pay privately through a "neighbor coop" model through The O Zone.

More Walkable/ Bikeable

In addition to our public outreach during Climate Week, more bike and pedestrian friendly ideas have been a theme for the Comp Plan Subcommittee on Transportation and Mobility. Dovetailing with these "Complete Streets" recommendations, the opportunity to work with Dutchess County and DOT presented itself. The DOT identified the Landman Kill bridge over Route 9 as in need of replacement and this prompted Mayor Bassett and Trustee Lewit to get a study from County Planning with options for revamping the corridor from the bridge up to Northern Dutchess Hospital. Community workshops are being planned to solicit feedback on the options.

Towards a More Connected Future

2022 showed us to be resilient and able to take on ambitious projects. There is so much work to still see through! We now have over 400 subscribers to the Climate Smart Rhinebeck newsletter, folks interested in helping us push forward the transition to a more climate-friendly Rhinebeck Village. We are excited to tackle our work in 2023!