

2025 DUTCHESS COUNTY CLIMATE SMART ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT



**Climate Smart
Communities**
Certified Silver



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dutchess County would like to thank the past and current volunteers who have served on the [County's Climate Smart Communities Task Force](#) for their expertise and guidance in executing and documenting various climate actions that have enabled the County to achieve Silver-level certification in the NYS Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program.

Significant CSC support has come from the Dutchess County [Office of the County Executive](#), [Department of Planning & Development](#), [Department of Public Works](#), the [Division of Solid Waste Management](#), as well as partners including the [Dutchess County Environmental Management Council \(EMC\)](#), [Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County \(CCEDC\)](#), [Hudson Valley Regional Council \(HVRC\)](#), [NYSERDA](#), and the NY DEC's [Climate Smart Communities](#) and [Hudson River Estuary](#) Programs.

This report is a product of the Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities Task Force with support provided by the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development.





A MESSAGE FROM THE CSC TASK FORCE

Following an exceptionally productive year in 2024, Dutchess County's Climate Smart Communities Task Force entered 2025 in a different, but equally important, phase of this work.

In 2024, the County achieved a major milestone with its designation as a Silver Certified Climate Smart Community, the highest level currently offered through New York State's program. This accomplishment reflected years of sustained effort, coordination, and investment across departments, partners, and volunteers, and positioned Dutchess County as a leader in climate action at the county level.

With that milestone reached, 2025 became a year focused on carrying that momentum forward in a thoughtful and deliberate way. Rather than pursuing new initiatives at the same pace as the previous year, the Task Force concentrated on implementing recently adopted plans, advancing projects already underway, and ensuring that the systems and strategies developed in 2024 are fully integrated into County operations.

This included continued progress on climate action planning efforts, and advancement of adaptation and resilience initiatives initiated through the Climate Action Planning Institute. At the same time, the Task Force took the opportunity to assess its structure, priorities, and capacity, recognizing that long-term success will depend not only on what we do, but how we sustain and support this work over time.

Importantly, 2025 also marked the beginning of a longer-term transition from certification-focused efforts to implementation-focused outcomes. Achieving Silver certification was not an endpoint, but a foundation. The Task Force is now increasingly focused on translating plans into measurable results. As we look ahead, this period of recalibration is critical. The next recertification cycle in 2029 will require not only maintaining existing actions, but also demonstrating continued progress and impact. The work underway now, though less visible than the milestones of 2024, is essential to ensuring that Dutchess County remains well-positioned to meet that moment.

The Task Force remains committed to advancing practical, locally grounded solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen climate resilience, and support the health and well-being of our communities. We are grateful for the continued partnership of County leadership, staff, community organizations, and residents who make this work possible.

DUTCHESS COUNTY
 **CLIMATE SMART**

INTRODUCTION

Dutchess County recognizes that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions released into the atmosphere over the past century have contributed to the changing climate, the consequences of which pose challenges to the future health, well-being, and prosperity of our communities. While climate change is a global issue, the impacts of a changing climate pose a significant concern for local communities. Dutchess County has long supported environmental protection efforts, including taking steps to increase use of renewable energy sources, both in County government facilities and the community at large.

The purpose of this progress report is to summarize the climate action work done by the County in 2024. This report will be made available publicly on the [County's environmental website](#).

NEW YORK'S CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The [New York State Climate Smart Communities \(CSC\) program](#) creates a network of New York municipalities seeking to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources, reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced, and increase communities' resiliency to the impacts of climate change. Other entities such as [NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities \(CEC\) program](#) also provide technical assistance, as well as grants to support the completion of climate actions. Dutchess County leaders have determined that involvement in these programs can help reduce overall energy usage and its associated costs, and increase the use of renewable energy sources. The program also provides guidance to local governments on best practices for mitigating and adapting to climate change and offers a source of matching grants for projects that advance stated goals.

In July 2017, the County Legislature requested the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council (EMC) to provide recommendations on actions that the County can take to reduce fossil fuel usage, and to recommend fossil fuel reduction goals. In its [report](#) to the Legislature, the EMC recommended pursuing certification in the CSC program and a related Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program, sponsored by NYSERDA.

After the CSC Pledge was adopted and filed with the appropriate State agencies, the next mandatory step in becoming a CSC was to name a Task Force and Coordinator to shepherd the County through the certification process. The County carefully considered the advice provided by the NYS CSC website in putting forth a framework and naming Task Force members and Coordinators for inclusion in this effort. The CSC Task Force has included individuals who represent different segments of the community, focusing on those entities and individuals that have leadership positions or are in innovative fields that are leading current efforts to undertake climate actions. These individuals represent a diverse and talented collection of people committed to reducing the County's overall energy usage, greening its supply and making it more resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The Task Force was initially established to review the elements of the Climate Smart Communities program to certify Dutchess County as a Bronze-level CSC. The Task Force has been successful in that effort by gathering necessary data, conducting required studies, and submitting documentation to the NYS CSC program through its online portal.



Climate Smart Communities

Certified Silver



To achieve certification, the State's CSC program requires that communities complete a minimum number of actions. The first level of certification is the Bronze-level, which requires the completion of actions that correspond to at least 120 points, as described in the CSC program. In addition, communities must include at least one action under four of the CSC program's different pledge elements, two actions that are defined as "mandatory" and three that are defined as "priority." As a result of the Task Force's efforts, in September 2019, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) announced that [Dutchess County earned Bronze-level certification in the New York State-Certified Climate Smart Community program.](#)

The second, and current highest, level of certification is the Silver-level, which requires the completion of actions that correspond to at least 300 points. In addition, communities must include at least one action under seven of the CSC program's different pledge elements, two actions that are defined as "mandatory" and six defined as "priority." Because of the efforts of the County, with leadership by the Task Force, the County was successful in qualifying for Silver-level certification in the NYS CSC program in September 2024. This certification will remain active until 2029, at which time the County will need to resubmit for certification renewal.

2025 DUTCHESS COUNTY CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY TASK FORCE MEMBERS



Gary Bassett

- Mayor, Village of Rhinebeck
- Chair, Hudson 7 Intermunicipal Council



Europa McGovern

- Chair, City of Poughkeepsie Waterfront Advisory Committee
- Director, Ulster County Dept. of the Environment



Mary Ann Cunningham

- Professor of Earth Science and Geography, Vassar College



Allan Page

- Principal, A. Page & Associates, LLC Energy Consultants
- CEO, The Hudson Renewable Energy Institute



Melissa Everett

- Executive Director, Sustainable Hudson Valley



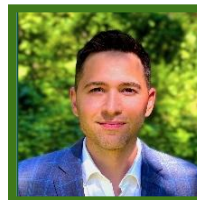
Eleanor Peck

- Deputy Executive Director & CEC Coordinator, Hudson Valley Regional Council
- Member, City of Beacon Conservation Advisory Committee



Lisa Kaul

- Legislator-District 6, Dutchess County Legislature



Devin Rigolino

- Env. Program Director, Dutchess County
- Dutchess County Climate Smart Coordinator & CSC Task Force Chair
- Vice-Chair, Hudson 7 Intermunicipal Council



Evelina Knodel

- Director of Operations, Dutchess Outreach



Nancy Severns

- Member, Dutchess County Environmental Management Council
- Master Naturalist



Michael Lauchaire

- Research & Development and Innovation Program Manager, Central Hudson Gas & Electric



Brian Scoralick

- Executive Director, Dutchess County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Member, Dutchess County Ag. & Farmland Protection Board

2025 CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY TASK FORCE MEETINGS

The full Task Force is convened on an as needed basis, usually 2-4 times per year. The goal of full Task Force meetings is for committees and staff to give updates on various actions and to share and discuss any communications submitted. Most of the work spent on action implementation does not occur during Task Force meetings but are typically executed in between Task Force meetings by the Task Force's various committees and members.

Dutchess County's full CSC Task Force convened in 2025 on the following dates:

- **June 2nd** | [Meeting Summary](#)
- **September 15th** | [Meeting Summary](#)

The County's DPW building is heated and cooled by a geothermal ground source heat pump system.²



DUTCHESS COUNTY OVERVIEW

Dutchess County is centrally located within the Hudson Valley region in southeastern New York State and is bordered by Connecticut to the east, Putnam County to the south, Columbia County to the north, and Orange and Ulster Counties across the Hudson River to the west. It covers approximately 802 square miles, including 20 square miles of the Hudson River.

Dutchess County is comprised of 30 municipalities: 20 towns, eight villages, and two cities. The County seat is the City of Poughkeepsie, located on the shore of the Hudson River. Poughkeepsie is approximately equidistant from Albany and New York City.

POPULATION

Dutchess County's population was 299,963 according to 2024 ACS data. The County population had undergone a tremendous increase over the 20th century and into the early 21st century, up until this most recent census period when the county saw its first population decrease since 1890 (Figure 1).

Most of the County's residents live along the Hudson River, the Route 9, Route 44, and Route 55 corridors, or in pockets of more dense settlements such as village hamlets.

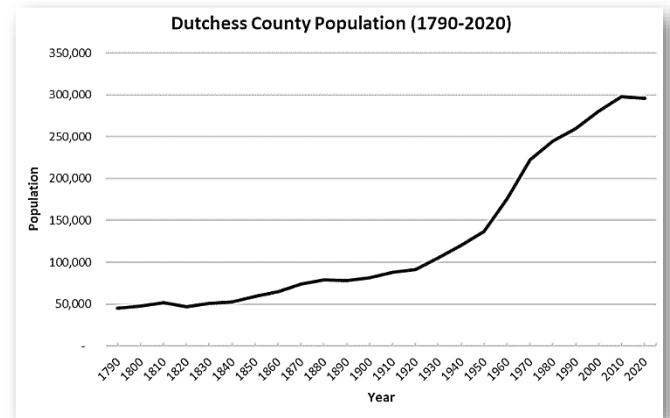


Figure 1: Population Graph

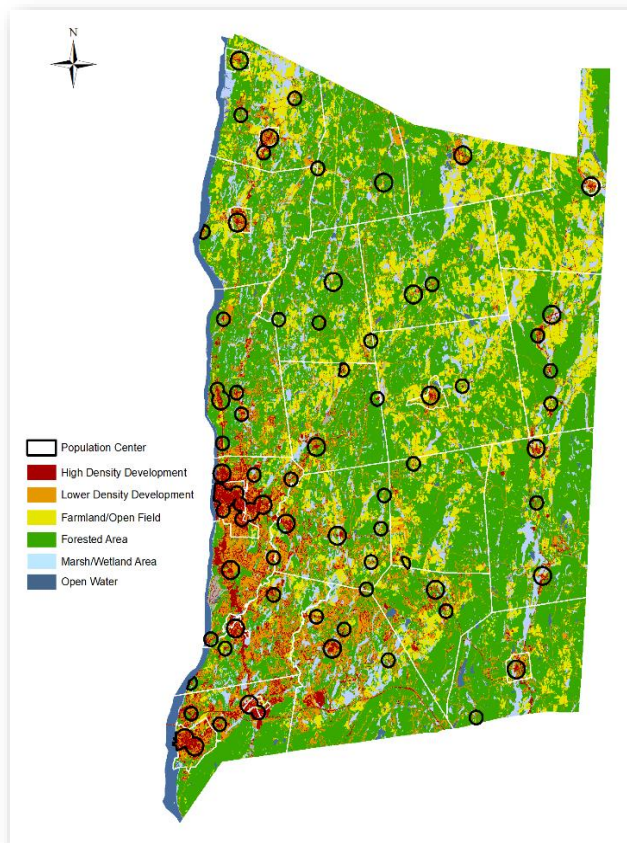


Figure 2: Centers & Land Use

Approximately 75 percent of the population of the County lives in the southwest region, including the Cities of Beacon and Poughkeepsie, the Villages of Fishkill and Wappingers Falls, and the Towns of Beekman, East Fishkill, Fishkill, LaGrange, Poughkeepsie, and Wappinger (Figure 2). Several municipalities in Dutchess County have seen increasing urban and suburban development over time due to population growth and conventional development strategies.

Dutchess County has also seen changes in land use. [Aerial photographs](#) of Dutchess County from the 1930s show that the majority of land was used for farming, with small hamlets and town centers. Since the 1950s there has been a large shift from agriculture to suburban development, as many former farm fields have been sub-divided for use as housing and commercial developments. Most recently, development has continued in the suburban centers in the southwestern portion of the County (Beacon, Fishkill, East Fishkill, Wappinger, LaGrange, and Poughkeepsie), as well as along the Route 9, Route 44, and Route 52 corridors.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DUTCHESS COUNTY

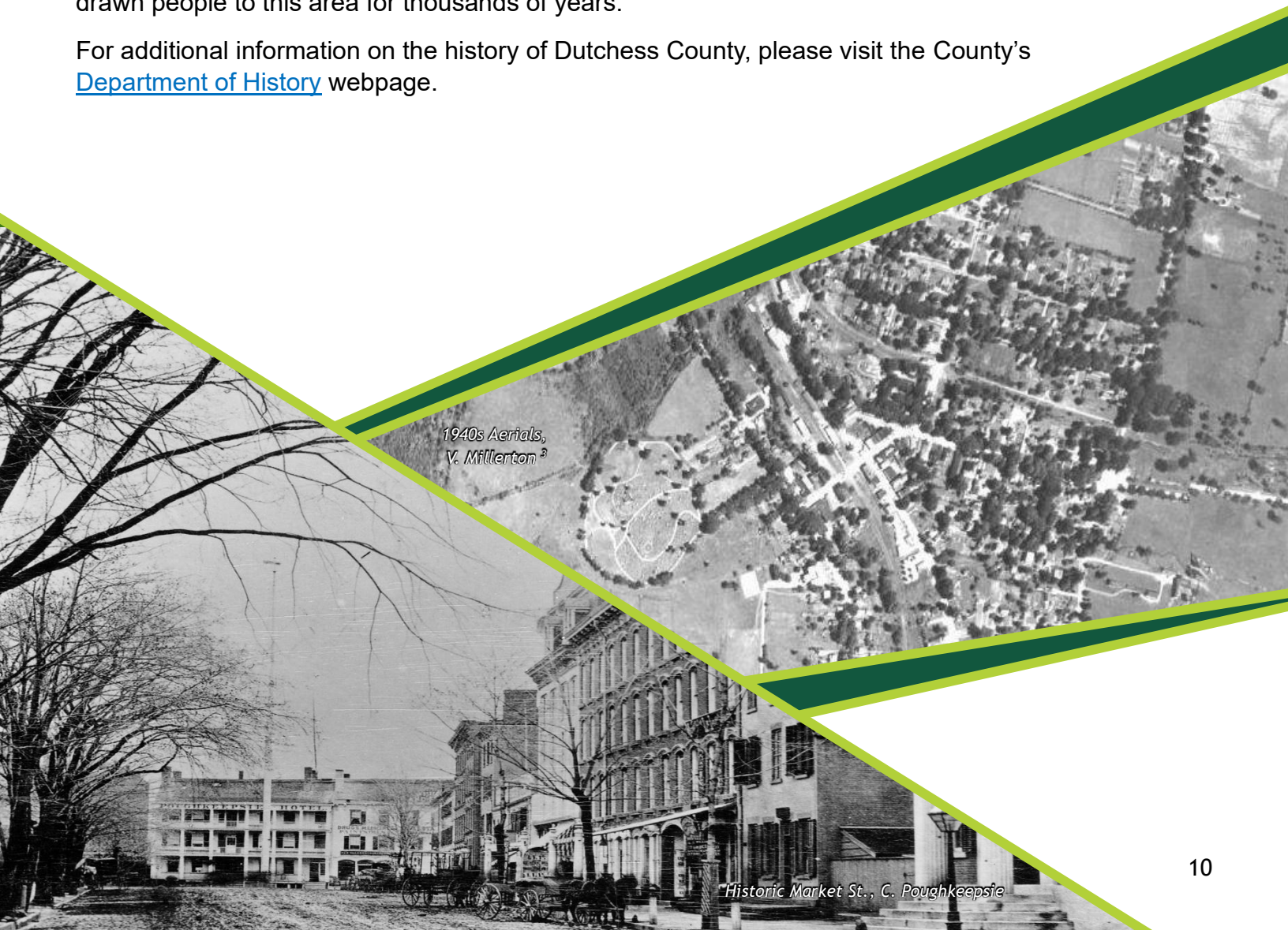
Dutchess County rests on the homelands of the Munsee Lenape. These Indigenous people populated the lower Hudson Valley and were present when Henry Hudson first sailed up the river that the Lenape tribe called Mahicantuck, or “The River that Runs Both Ways.”

After the arrival of Europeans, settlements clustered along the river at the sites of modern Beacon, Fishkill, Poughkeepsie, Rhinebeck, and Red Hook. Colonists who came from New England founded communities throughout the areas of eastern Dutchess in the opening decades of the eighteenth century.

Until the American Revolution, much of Dutchess County was organized into large land patents. During the post-Revolutionary era, the County began a slow climb to economic prosperity. The combination of highways, railroads, and river access transformed western Dutchess into an industrial powerhouse, while strengthening agriculture in eastern Dutchess. In 1967, Dutchess voters passed a county charter that created the Office of the County Executive and the Dutchess County Legislature to provide dedicated service for county-wide needs.

Today, Dutchess County remains rooted in a deep history that in many ways has grown from the abundant natural resources the Hudson Valley provides, and without which modern communities could never have flourished. It is for this reason that the CSC efforts the County has achieved and continues to pursue are so important – so that future generations can enjoy the same natural wonders that have drawn people to this area for thousands of years.

For additional information on the history of Dutchess County, please visit the County’s [Department of History](#) webpage.



ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change and environmental degradation pose real challenges to Dutchess County communities. As global temperatures increase, noticeable changes will be seen in the climate of New York State and Dutchess County, and the effects are likely to be felt more acutely in the coming years with larger and more frequent floods, higher temperatures, and more severe and frequent weather events. Many of these impacts have already begun to be felt by the people, plants, wildlife, and ecosystems that call Dutchess County home.

In addition to environmental disruptions, the impacts of climate change also pose risks to human health and safety. Extreme heat events can lead to heat-related illnesses, particularly for vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Increased flooding can result in waterborne diseases and pose direct threats to life and property. Changes in air quality, driven by higher temperatures and increased pollution, can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma. Furthermore, more frequent and intense storms and floods can disrupt essential services, including healthcare, clean water, and emergency response systems, creating additional challenges for community safety and resilience. Addressing these health risks requires integrating climate adaptation strategies into public health planning and ensuring that vulnerable populations have

the resources and protections they need to thrive in a changing climate.

Hazard	Current	Future
 Temperature	• Average annual increases of nearly 3°F since 1960 • High temperatures occur with greater frequency and intensity	• Average temperatures continue to rise • Extreme temperatures will occur
 Flooding	• About 44 inches of rain/year • Many extreme precipitation events • Hudson River water level has risen more than one foot since 1900	• Precipitation will become increasingly variable • More frequent and intense heavy rain events • Sea level rise and storm surge along the Hudson River more frequently
 Drought	• Notable flash droughts in 2002, 2017, and 2022.	• Longer periods without precipitation
 Wind	• Multiple high wind events	• Greater potential for high winds as intensity of hurricanes, tropical storms, and tropical depressions increases
 Winter Conditions	• Winters have warmed 3x faster than summers • Later snowfall and earlier snowmelt	• Fewer days below freezing (32°F) • Greater snowfall during major winter storm events
 Landslides	• Southern and western parts of Dutchess County at risk due to steep slopes	• Precipitation-driven landslides could occur more frequently

CLIMATE CHANGE

As further described in the County's [Natural Resource Inventory \(NRI\)](#), climate change is defined as any significant change in the measure of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, or wind) lasting for an extended period, often decades or longer. Until the advent of the industrial revolution, global climate change occurred over long periods and was caused by a variety of natural factors. However, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an international body of scientists working through the United Nations, has concluded that the earth's climate is changing more rapidly than ever before. The IPCC is confident that this change is caused by the increase in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted by humans through the accumulated effects of many activities such as the

Figure 3: [Resilient Ways Forward](#) Climate Change Fact Sheet Excerpt

production, transport, and burning of fossil fuels for electrical power; heating; and powering motor vehicles. Due to the increased combustion of fossil fuels, the current global average atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide is about 415 parts per million (ppm), the highest level in over 700,000 years. As a result, the global annual average temperature has risen at an alarming rate, with ten of the warmest years on record having occurred since 2010. Estimates of continued climate change in the future are heavily dependent on the rate of human GHG emissions. If yearly emissions continue to increase rapidly, models project that by the end of this century global average temperature will be at least 5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the 1901-1960 average. If annual emissions increase more slowly and begin to decline significantly by 2050, models project temperatures would still be minimally 2.4 degrees warmer than the first half of the 20th century, with a possible maximum of up to 5.9 degrees warmer.

Over the next several decades, our changing climate will impact Dutchess County across a range of issues. Trends include rising temperatures, more extreme weather, greater but uneven precipitation, more flooding events, and subsequent impacts from sea-level rise and storm surges to the Hudson River. The County may also face potential population increases from migration from coastal areas due to sea-level rise. All these potential climate change impacts will likely result in habitat loss and cause strains on existing infrastructure. For a more detailed description of climate change and the local impacts that we can expect to experience on Dutchess County, please visit the County's [Natural Resource Inventory website](#).



Flooding from the Fallkill Creek on North Hamilton St., C. Poughkeepsie ⁵

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The changing climate is affecting Dutchess County in many ways. Some individuals already feel these impacts, whether it's in how they heat and cool their homes, how much they pay for food, or even how they think about the future.

Local communities are no different. How and where they've built infrastructure and provided services may no longer be adequate. And while the impacts of a changing climate may not all be negative, they still require a need to adjust the ways communities build, maintain, and think about the County. These changes will present unique challenges, and if done right, opportunities to create more resilient systems and services that minimize disruptions and better prepare everyone to meet the uncertainties of a changing climate.

Many communities in the United States have started to take responsibility for addressing climate change at the local level. Reducing fossil fuel use in the community can have many benefits in addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. More efficient use of energy decreases utility and transportation costs for residents and businesses. Retrofitting homes and businesses to be more efficient creates local jobs. In addition, when residents save on energy costs, they are more likely to spend at local businesses and add to the local economy. Reducing fossil fuel use improves air quality, and increasing opportunities for walking and bicycling improves residents' health. On top of all these benefits, building resilient communities via pursuing climate actions is also a great way to create community connections, as neighbors are brought together over a common cause.

Local communities can address the impacts of climate change by collecting information, educating decision makers, and advocating for changes to policies and projects at all levels. There are also several clear actions, outlined by the NYS CSC program that local governments can undertake to reduce emissions and other negative environmental impacts.

While significant progress has already been made in addressing climate change at the local level, the work is far from complete. Building climate-resilient communities is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort, collaboration, and innovation. As the challenges evolve and new issues emerge, it is essential that communities stay proactive in adapting infrastructure, policies, and services to meet future needs. The momentum gained so far must be sustained and expanded upon, ensuring that all residents benefit from ongoing efforts to reduce emissions, improve resilience, and create a more sustainable, thriving future for Dutchess County. The work ahead will require commitment from all levels of government, local organizations, businesses, and residents working together to build on the foundation laid thus far.



Attendees at the County's 2025 Dutchess County Earth Day event ⁶



DUTCHESS COUNTY CLIMATE SMART ACTIONS

Dutchess County has pursued several actions to help make County operations more sustainable and local communities more resilient. This report breaks out the County's climate actions into two sections, the first of which includes a summary table that lists actions and point totals, followed by a section that discusses each action in further detail.

Every local government is unique and must balance its own individual circumstances when selecting which climate actions to pursue, when to pursue them, and how they are carried out and documented. While the State offers recommended best practices, there are a myriad of ways to advance sustainability efforts. It is important to note that while the County may have completed a particular action, there is no guarantee that the State will award points via its CSC program due to factors such as differences in how local governments document and describe actions, or actions that have been completed and still offer emissions reduction benefits but have timed out from the State's lookback period.

It is worth noting that the purpose of this report is to document climate actions specifically eligible for points towards certification in the NYS Climate Smart Communities Program. In addition to those actions listed here, the County is also involved in other climate and environmental initiatives and projects that don't qualify for points in the CSC program but still have a meaningful impact. For additional information about other climate and environmental activities, please visit the County's [environmental webpage](#) for updates.

SUMMARY OF COUNTY ACTIONS

PLEDGE ELEMENTS	ACTIONS COMPLETED	ACTIONS IN PROGRESS	POINTS BY PLEDGE ELEMENT
TOTALS	50	10	362
1. BUILD A CLIMATE-SMART COMMUNITY	5	0	40
2. INVENTORY EMISSIONS, SET GOALS, AND PLAN FOR CLIMATE ACTION	3	0	48
3. DECREASE ENERGY USE	5	3	16
4. SHIFT TO CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY	3	0	38
5. USE CLIMATE-SMART MATERIALS MANAGEMENT	6	0	17
6. IMPLEMENT CLIMATE-SMART LAND USE	8	0	57
7. ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE	10	3	64
8. SUPPORT A GREEN INNOVATION ECONOMY	3	0	21
9. INFORM AND INSPIRE THE PUBLIC	4	0	17
10. ENGAGE IN AN EVOLVING PROCESS OF CLIMATE ACTION	2	0	9
11. INNOVATION	1	2	5
12. PERFORMANCE	0	2	30

Table 1: County actions by status

* On the following pages, actions that have a check next to them are ones that were completed in 2025 while actions without a check are ones that remain in progress. Actions that were completed in prior years are inventoried and described in prior reports and should be consulted for further details. New actions will be added to future progress reports as applicable.

NEW & ONGING COUNTY ACTIONS IN DETAIL

PE3: DECREASE ENERGY USE

☐ PE3: INTERIOR LIGHTING UPGRADES

Standard Action | Points: **3**

LEDs are advantageous over older incandescent light sources due to their lower power consumption, smaller size, and longer overall lifetime.

Due to the large number of buildings & facilities that the County owns and operates, many of which contain dozens or even hundreds of lighting fixtures, the County does not currently have a detailed inventory showing the total number of lighting fixtures that are in operation. However, efforts to upgrade interior lighting elements within County buildings have been ongoing for years, and a majority of interior lights have already been upgraded to LEDs (light-emitting diodes). While work has been done to implement interior lighting upgrades, this action is considered in progress as the County is still working on accumulating the needed materials to document this work to submit for CSC points.

☐ PE3: BUILDING ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Standard Action | Points: **2**

Building Energy Management (BEM) systems are centralized systems that are used to manage lighting and HVAC systems, which leads to more efficient energy use in buildings. As County HVAC systems are upgraded, BEMs are put in place. As lighting upgrades are made, the County installs occupancy sensor switches that automatically turn lights off when an empty room is sensed, further reducing energy needs. The County currently has approximately 543,047 sq. feet of interior space covered by some type of BEM system, and this action was successfully documented and submitted to the CSC program in 2024.

The County is currently in the process of implementing a new BEM system at the County courthouse building on Market Street in the City of Poughkeepsie.

☐ PE3: ADVANCED VEHICLES

Standard Action | Points: **2**

As of 2025, the County has incorporated several electric (4) and hybrid (29) vehicles into its fleet, amounting to just over 5% of the fleet total, which includes County transit vehicles. In the fall of 2024, the County received a grant from NYSEERDA's Clean Energy Communities program to purchase 2-3 additional fully electric vehicles for the County's vehicle fleet. In 2025, the specifications were finalized for the contract, with plans to solicit quotes in 2026 and begin purchase and install 2027.

PE5: USE CLIMATE-SMART MATERIALS MANAGEMENT



PE5: COMMUNITY REPAIR

Standard Action | Points: 4

Repair Cafés are local events that provide opportunities for residents to bring household items to be repaired at no charge thanks to skilled volunteers. These events can help communities shift from a “throwaway” mindset, where broken and damaged items are discarded rather than attempted to be repaired. Community repair events not only help reduce waste generated, but also foster a sense of community engagement, creativity, and fun as repair coaches, often neighbors, and community members collaborate to extend the usefulness of the items they own. The County promotes local repair cafes on its [solid waste website](#), and in addition, co-sponsored and participated in the Town of Poughkeepsie’s repair café in February of 2025.



PE7: ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

☐ PE7: CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

Priority Action | Points: 8

Climate adaptation planning outlines a vision and set of strategies to improve a community's resilience to climate change. As a part of the Dutchess County Transportation Council's [Resilient Ways Forward](#) project, the County recommended ways to adapt to or reduce the adverse impacts of climate change on the County's transportation system. This study included roads and bridges, buses and trains, sidewalks, rail trails, and other strategic transportation assets, and touches state, regional, county, and local agencies alike. The County received 5 points for this adaptation plan focused on a transportation scope.

In 2023-24, the County also participated along with 8 County municipalities in the Hudson Valley Regional Council's (HVRC) Climate Action Planning Institute (CAPI). As part of CAPI, Dutchess County also signed on to a supplementary action that will result in the creation of a community-developed climate adaptation and resilience vision statement and a moderate scope climate adaptation plan. Most of the adaptation planning work took place in 2024 and 2025, and the project is ongoing and anticipated to be completed in 2026. The vision statement for this moderate scope adaptation plan awarded the County an additional 3 points under the CSC action.

☐ PE7: CLIMATE-RESILIENT HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Standard Action | Points: 3

In 2016, the Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response developed a Countywide Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in which all municipalities participated. The creation of this plan helps the area to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazard events and disasters such as floods, severe storms, severe winter weather, extreme temperatures, and wildfires – all events that are anticipated to become more frequent and/or more severe due to climate change.

In 2023, the County began a major update to the 2016 HMP. The new plan, which continued to progress in 2024 and 2025, will assess how climate change is affecting the County's vulnerability and will also document strategies to address hazards as they relate to climate change. This new HMP will allow the County and participating municipalities to maintain their eligibility for federal mitigation grant funding from the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (NYS DHSES) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This plan is anticipated to be completed in 2026.

☐ PE7: SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Standard Action | Points: 6

With the scope of knowledge of the County's various staff/representatives and access to resources that many local municipalities may not always have, Dutchess County prioritizes collaborating and supporting local efforts to protect critical drinking water supplies for the various drinking water sources throughout the county. To date, the Department of Planning & Development and the Department of Health have been involved with several local Drinking Water Source Protection Plans (DWSP2s), serving in roles both on stakeholder groups and plan management teams. The County currently has three DWSP2s that it has been closely involved with that are in development/awaiting NYS approval (Red Hook, Beacon, and Hudson 7

DWSP2s). In addition, the County has also been closely involved in a fourth plan that has been completed, adopted, and is already in process of being implemented (Fishkill DWSP2). A link to the completed plan can be found here: <https://www.fishkill-ny.gov/uploads/3/8/0/7/38072219/29173.pdf>

Work on the Hudson 7 DWSP2 continued through 2025 and is anticipated to be approved by NYS in 2026.



Electric vehicle using County EV charging station ²



PE11: INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

Standard Action | Points: **5**

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation are evolving fields with new technologies, policy solutions, and programmatic solutions being developed around the country and around the world. Local governments are encouraged to implement innovative solutions that achieve the same goals as the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program but are not included in the list of CSC certification actions.

Beginning in 2025, the County began a solid waste reduction and diversion study to look at ways the County can implement new actions and programs focused on reducing waste. Recommended actions will be considered via different factors, including potential carbon emissions reduction. This study and the subsequent actions that come following its completion have the potential to reduce the County's carbon emissions and therefore we intend to submit it as an innovative action.

- HVRC secured a \$3 million grant to mitigate methane emissions at Mid-Hudson landfills. The project officially got under contract and kicked off on November 1, 2024, and continued through 2025. The goal of the project is to install biofilters to reduce methane emissions at 13 closed landfills in municipalities in the Mid-Hudson Region, including one owned by Dutchess County. Biofilters are a reliable and cost-effective solution for reducing landfill gas (LFG) emissions by utilizing methanotrophs, specialized bacteria capable of converting landfill methane to less harmful gases. The project also includes an optional solar and battery storage feasibility study component, as well as pollinator plantings.

Following the completion of this project, the County has the potential to see a great reduction in carbon emissions related to the closed landfill at the Hudson Valley Regional Airport. This project does not fit under an existing CSC action and therefore Dutchess intends to submit it as an innovative action upon completion.

PE12: PERFORMANCE

☐ PE12: REDUCE GHGS FROM GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

Standard Action | Points: 15

Dutchess County has taken several efforts over the course of decades to increase the energy efficiency of its buildings and facilities and reduce its reliance on fossil fuel generated energy, both as a cost savings measure and a climate smart initiative. These efforts include implementing energy efficient upgrades to existing HVAC systems and interior lighting, installation of building energy management systems, as well as entering into a power purchase agreement for clean electricity produced via solar array on county-leased property, thereby offsetting GHG producing energy that would otherwise need to be procured from the standard grid.

The County will continue to pursue energy efficiency actions that will further offset and reduce GHG emissions produced from County facilities, as well as document these actions and emissions as necessary to report and qualify for this CSC action.

☐ PE12: REDUCE GHGS FROM GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

Standard Action | Points: 15

As of 2025, the County has incorporated several electric (4) and hybrid (29) vehicles into its fleet, amounting to just over 5% of the fleet total, which includes County transit vehicles. In the fall of 2024, the County received a grant from NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities program to purchase 2-3 additional fully electric vehicles for the County's vehicle fleet. Transitioning more of the County vehicle fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) and other low-carbon fuel sources could contribute significantly to achieving Dutchess County's GHG reduction targets while saving the government money on fuel costs and improving local air quality.

The County will continue to monitor its progress as emission from government vehicles continue to decrease and will document these actions to achieve points in the CSC program when a 10% reduction has been achieved.

NEXT STEPS

The County will continue implementation of its climate action plan that will guide its efforts through 2030, with strategies to further reduce and monitor emissions from County operations. Because CSC certification expires five years after it is awarded, the County will also work to sustain its progress by keeping sufficient actions and points active and well documented to maintain certification throughout the life of the NYS CSC program. Currently, the County has several CSC actions underway, along with additional climate and environmental initiatives that do not earn CSC points but still contribute meaningful impact.

Looking ahead, in 2026, major projects include:

- Continuing GHG emissions monitoring work at the County's landfill working w. HVRC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Completing the County's waste reduction and diversion study
- Continuing progress of an HVAC upgrade project at the County office building and County courthouse, including the installation of a new building energy management system at the County courthouse
- Developing an EV charging station plan
- Completion of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan update
- Coordinating annual County Earth Day event
- Hosting backyard composting workshops
- Conducting an employee commute survey

CONCLUSION

The County's work to address and prepare for climate change is a continual and evolving effort. Although many meaningful steps have been taken since the Dutchess County Climate Smart Communities Task Force was established, substantial work still lies ahead.

A key priority is balancing ambitious sustainability goals with the need to maintain the uninterrupted delivery of essential County services relied upon by thousands of residents. With the County's first climate action plan now underway, the focus shifts toward implementing practical, achievable actions that support this balance. The County will also continue pursuing external funding opportunities to help advance larger-scale climate initiatives. At the same time, the County will closely monitor emerging State and Federal policies that impact not only County operations, but also local municipalities, households, and businesses.

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<https://climate.ny.gov/resources/scoping-plan/>

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CONTACT US

We welcome your feedback,
questions, and ideas.

DUTCHESS COUNTY CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES TASK FORCE

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Planning/Climate-Smart-Communities.htm>

DUTCHESS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

<https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Planning/planning.htm>

