



# Ulster County 2021 Climate Smart Communities Recertification Documentation

## PE10 Action: Updates to Strategies and Plans

**Background:** Ulster County's first plan developed to address climate change and sustainability issues within County government operations was its Environmental Plan which was released in December 2008.

In 2018, the County initiated a project to update this plan and to refocus the strategies, roles and responsibilities and action items contained within the Environmental Plan around climate change mitigation. The result of this process was the Ulster County Government Operations Climate Action Plan which was released in November 2019.

The Ulster County Government Operations Climate Action Plan is publicly available at the Ulster County Department of the Environment website:

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/department-environment>

### Documentation:

- Ulster County Environmental Plan  
Available here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/UC%20Environmental%20Plan.pdf>
- Ulster County Government Operations Climate Action Plan  
Available here:  
[https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/environment/Ulster%20County%20Government%20Operations%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%202019\\_web.pdf](https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/environment/Ulster%20County%20Government%20Operations%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%202019_web.pdf)



# Ulster County Department of the Environment

## Environmental Plan



FINAL  
December 2008



**THE CHALLENGE**

Today's environmental issues and problems are interdisciplinary and complex. They not only impact our physical environment but our overall quality of life, public safety, local and global economies, and even human health. This is true even within Ulster County. We face localized issues, like flooding, that have profound effects on the environment and our communities. We also face global issues, like climate change and energy issues, that effect our local natural resources, infrastructure and even our daily driving routines. All environmental issues, even local ones, have complex ecological and social interconnections.

When we consider the interconnected nature of environmental issues, its not a surprise that attempting to manage and address environmental issues at a County level often requires the action of multiple departments that draw on many different types of expertise. Our local environmental issues regularly cross traditional County department boundaries. From a County government perspective the challenge then becomes: how do we effectively and efficiently integrate departments and individuals to address our complex environmental issues?

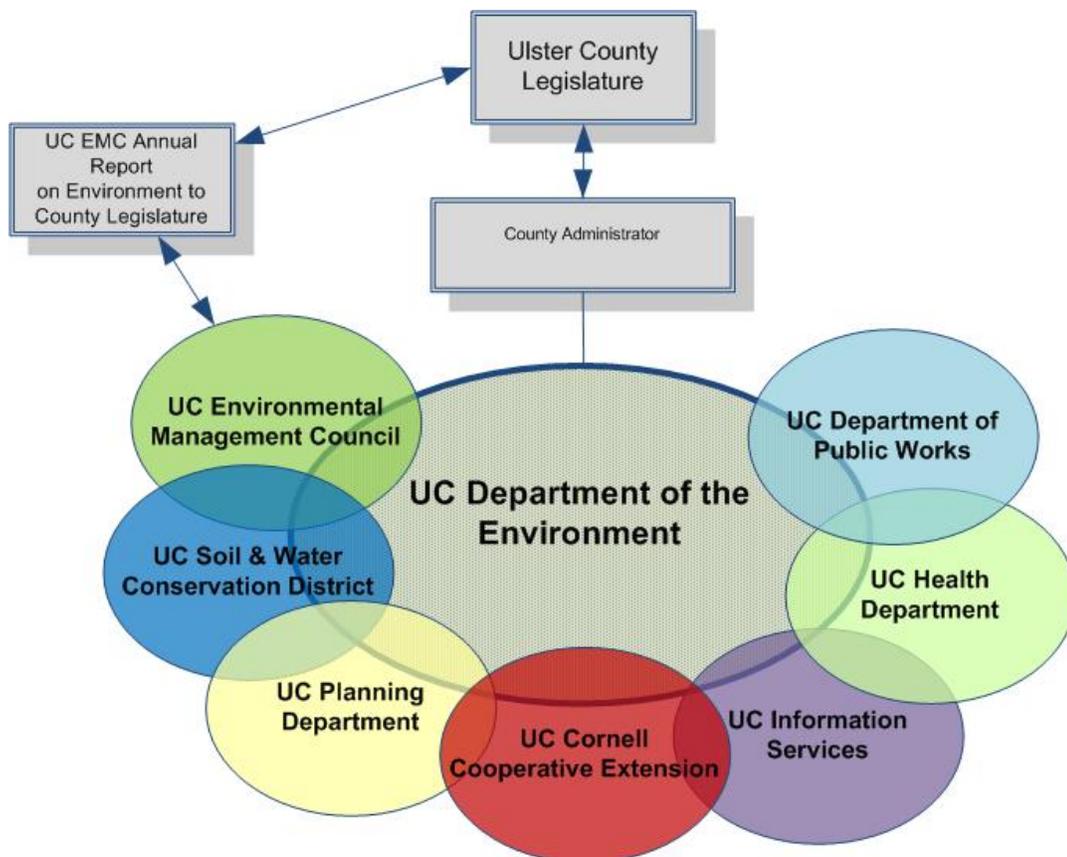
**A NEW STRATEGY**

In the fall of 2007, with the creation of the UC Department of the Environment, Ulster County embarked on an innovative way to meet this challenge. The Department of the Environment has a unique role within Ulster County government. It is responsible for coordinating programs and activities related to the environment across six different county departments and agencies. Those Departments and Agencies include: UC Health Department, UC Planning Department, UC Information Services, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, UC Soil and Water Conservation District, and UC Department of Public Works. Collectively, these Departments and Agencies are referred to as the Coordinated Departments.

The Coordinated Departments tackle a host of environmental problems. Their programs are wide ranging and reflect the expertise and experience of personnel in each Department. (A list of Coordinated Department environmental programs is included as Appendix A.) The Department of the Environment is responsible for working with all the involved departments to increase the efficiency and efficacy of projects with a variety of environmental implications.

Department of the Environment responsibilities include supervising select environmental compliance responsibilities, providing a forum for the Coordinated Departments to share information on environmental projects, providing technical assistance to County departments, and helping County departments characterize and address existing environmental needs. This helps the County to prevent duplication of services. The Department allows the County to ensure that stewardship is balanced with financial accountability.

***The Department of the Environment as a Coordinating Department***



## **THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN**

This document is the Ulster County Environmental Plan as prepared by the UC Department of the Environment in collaboration with the Coordinated Departments. The Environmental Plan is the cornerstone of the Department of the Environment's coordinating efforts. The Plan is called for in the local law creating the Department and it establishes a way to prioritize across the many ongoing environmental projects in County government. It allows the Department of the Environment to apply its unique environmental perspective and focus efforts in a way that will produce tangible environmental benefits for Ulster County. This Environmental Plan is both the product of our initial discussions as well as a guide to the Department of the Environment's work over the next year.

There are many projects or activities that could potentially benefit from the coordination role and environmental perspective the Department of the Environment offers. However, it is critical that the Department of the Environment focus efforts on specific projects where we can add value to the work that is already being progressed by individual departments through coordination and environmental expertise. This Plan is meant to transparently present the reason for the Department's involvement in specific programs and activities.

The purpose of this Environmental Plan is to: 1) identify the projects on which the Department of the Environment will focus 2) outline sets of objectives for each project, and 3) list action items, deliverables and deadlines related to those projects. This will allow the Department of the Environment and the Coordinated Departments to prioritize environmental work across the county and focus on issues that have been identified to be of the highest priority and ones which are viewed to be key building blocks for subsequent efforts.

## **HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED**

Beginning in March 2008, a series of meetings were conducted by the Department of the Environment with individual Department Heads representing the Coordinated Departments. These initial meetings explored the major responsibilities of each agency and the environmental dimensions of that work. This initial dialogue allowed for a basic assessment to be constructed for each of the coordinated departments to identify and better understand their individual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges.

From this initial dialogue, **three main functions** of the Department of the Environment were identified. These functional areas address the roles the department plays. They include: defining the department, coordinating existing programs and efforts within the county, and exploring ways to enhance environmental stewardship within County government and communities. These functional areas build on each other. For example, initially there needs to be more time invested in department establishment. In subsequent years, more time can be devoted to coordination and enhancing stewardship.

The initial Coordinated Department discussion also led to the identification of **four main program areas** in which the Department of the Environment will focus its efforts. These program areas are intended to be broader categories which encompass similar types of projects and initiatives. They represent the more specific work the Department is undertaking and include: activities associated with establishing the Department, regulatory compliance issues such as stormwater, sustainability initiatives, and natural resource related projects.

Both the functional areas and the program areas were developed by the Department of the Environment in close cooperation with the Coordinated Departments. These functional duties of the Department and the program areas are reflected throughout this plan.

**SCOPE OF THIS PLAN**

Because the Department of the Environment was created as a coordinating agency within county government, this plan is not about launching major new policy initiatives or programs that effect the entire county-at-large. As such, this plan is not about taking work or regulatory responsibilities (i.e. stormwater compliance) away from municipalities. Moreover, this plan is not about building the Department of the Environment to assume the work responsibilities entrusted to other county agencies nor is it about creating additional regulations.

The primary objective of the Environmental Plan is to identify and prioritize the projects where the coordination and the professional input that the Department of the Environment offers will add value and expertise to the process or product. This primary objective reflects the primary goal of the Department of the Environment, which is to effectively coordinate environmental programs, services and compliance within the county government and between county agencies, thereby expanding and enhancing overall environmental capacity. In this way, the county can improve its effectiveness and efficiency in stewarding county environmental resources and reduce our own environmental footprint.

However, throughout all of our Department efforts, it is critical to remember that the Department must also be flexible so that it can respond to unanticipated issues and opportunities. It is important for this Department to exercise professional judgment when appropriate and address issues that are not explicitly detailed in this plan.

## **WORK AREAS**

### **WORK AREA #1 - DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHMENT & DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Key Message**

The Department of the Environment is filling a profound need within Ulster County for environmental coordination and information while also establishing itself as a new 'coordinating department'. It is important for the Department to:

- 1) invest time in establishing procedures and operating guidelines;
- 2) provide information to the County, municipalities and public and learn from them about the challenges they face and the needs they have; and,
- 3) maintain flexibility as a coordinating department to address important issues as they arise and provide information about more efficient problem solving within the County.

#### **CONTEXT**

Ulster County has a unique opportunity for coordination and enhancement of environmental projects with the Department of the Environment. However, in order to realize the full potential of the Department of the Environment and the Coordinating Department model, we need to take the time necessary to properly develop and establish the Department. The process by which the Department of Environment operates is just as important as the program's specific content. In order to do it right, the Department of the Environment needs to invest time establishing procedures with the Coordinated Departments, establish and support its relationship to the Environmental Management Council, and develop links with the municipalities.

The Department of the Environment crosses department boundaries. It is in a unique position to learn about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the County in our collective effort to provide environmental services. It needs to build operating procedures that integrate the strengths and expertise of the Coordinated Departments. It also needs to learn how to give back to the Coordinated Departments by creating a learning environment where information and experiences are shared. The Department of the Environment wants to work with the Coordinated Departments to further explore operating procedures, guidelines for involvement and projects, review procedures, procedures for future environmental plans, and methods of communication.

The Department of the Environment also needs to develop relationships with municipalities and to become established as an environmental resource in the community. These relationships, along with the Department's close relationship with the Environmental

Management Council, are critical to understanding the environmental needs and challenges Ulster County is facing.

**OBJECTIVES FOR DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHMENT**

**Objectives**

- E&D1- Establish Departmental operating procedures with Coordinated Depts.
- E&D2- Increase awareness of Department within County Government, municipalities, and local environmental organizations.
- E&D3- Establish the DoEnv as an information resource within the County through resource guides, information and links (web or in office).
- E&D4- Provide the UC EMC with technical and administrative support
- E&D5- Be responsive to environmental and coordination needs within the County.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHMENT**

Actions	Lead	Coordinated	Deliverable	Due Date
<b>1. Establish Rules and Procedures</b>				
Establish a guide to operating procedures and Departmental responsibilities	DoEnv	Coord Depts	Formalized Guidelines	12/1/08
<b>2. Develop Resource Guides</b>				
Monitor calls to DoEnv and log questions asked	DoEnv	NA	Call Log	Continuous
Create Database of environmental educators in area	DoEnv	CCE, UCSWCD	Database	11/1/2008
Survey County government sponsored education & outreach.	DoEnv	All Depts	List	2/1/2009
<b>3. Develop Department Website-</b>				
Launch initial basic website	DoEnv	IS	Website	10/1/2008
Add resource guides and additional information	DoEnv	IS	Website	Continuous
<b>4. Connect to Municipal Level</b>				
Attend a meeting or make connection in every municipality (via CAC meeting, town planners, planning board, other)	DoEnv	EMC, Planning	Report on meeting	6/1/2009
Perform needs assessment of towns to identify highest priority environmental items.	EMC, Planning	DoEnv	Needs Assessment Report	6/1/2009
<b>5. Support EMC</b>				
Provide Administrative Support	DoEnv	EMC	NA	Continuous
Provide technical support	DoEnv	EMC	NA	Continuous

**WORK AREA #2- REGULATORY COMPLIANCE: STORMWATER****Key Message**

Stormwater- also known as non-point source pollution- can negatively impact water quality and ecosystem health and has the potential to increase flood flows and infrastructure damage during precipitation events. Successfully administering and following the DEC Stormwater program will not only ensure regulatory compliance for the County but will help to protect our valuable water resources and help to prevent flood damage.

**CONTEXT**

Stormwater is another term for surface water runoff and is of environmental concern because it often carries pollutants including sediment, salt, oils, nutrients, bacteria, and other chemical pollutants. It is a major source of pollution in our waterways. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has taken on regulating stormwater within the state through several programs. Although the majority of the regulatory responsibility lies with individual municipalities, the county has regulatory responsibilities to fulfill.

Stormwater is a problem because of the pollutants it carries and its negative impact on water quality. However, stormwater quantity is also a problem. The more impervious surfaces there are in a watershed, the more surface water runoff there is during storm events and the greater the potential is for erosion and flooding. Stormwater programs offer another opportunity to educate people about the connections between landuse and flooding. Any public outreach on this issue should include these landscape connections between landuse and flooding.

Ulster County has developed a strong Stormwater Management Program within the Department of Public Works. The Stormwater Management Program has been very successful partnering with other county departments and agencies in meeting regulatory requirements. The Department of the Environment sees the County's primary objective with respect to stormwater to be building our internal capacity. This includes working with partners, leading efforts through the pooled resources model, and looking for additional grant funding for projects.

The Stormwater regulatory programs are relatively new, somewhat complex and require considerable resources and technical expertise at the municipal level. The County, because of the stormwater program and technical resources, is in a position where we can help build capacity at the municipal level. We see this as an important role that the Stormwater Management Program and the Department of the Environment can play. Sharing information,

techniques, and technical resources (where appropriate) are ways the County can support the municipalities in their compliance.

**OBJECTIVES FOR STORMWATER**

**Objectives**

- SW1- Coordinate with the UC DPW Stormwater Management Program to ensure that the county is meeting the regulatory requirements of the DEC Stormwater Program.
- SW2- Support municipalities with their permit compliance by providing information, technical support and, where applicable, staff support.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR STORMWATER**

Actions	Lead	Coordinated	Deliverable	Timeframe
<b>1. County Compliance</b>				
Prepare audit documentation for County	DPW	DoEnv, UCSWCD, Planning	Audit binder	10/1/2008
Complete storm drain stenciling of County infrastructure in MS4 area	DPW, UCSWCD	DoEnv	# of drains stenciled	10/15/2008
Draft a new Stormwater Management Plan addressing each of the six MCMs, tasks, dates, and responsible parties	DPW	DoEnv, UCSWCD, Planning	Management Plan	2/1/2009
Prepare Annual Report for County	DPW	DoEnv	Annual Report	6/1/2009
Begin Outfall Structure- Monitoring	DPW	DoEnv, UCSWCD, UCHD	Monitoring Schedule	11/1/2008
Identify and Eliminate Illicit Discharges	DPW	UCSWCD, UCHD, DoEnv	Document and correct as they occur	Continuous
Identify funding opportunities for Stormwater Management	DoEnv	DPW, UCSWCD, Planning	Inform DPW	Continuous
Review use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers by County on County property (beyond current scope of Stormwater permit)	DoEnv	DPW, UCHD	Report for file	6/1/2009
<b>2. Municipal Support-</b>				
Create maps delineating regulated areas and other areas of importance. Post on SWMP website	UCIS	DPW, DoEnv,	Maps on website	2/1/2009
Hold workshop/information session for interested municipalities on sewershed delineation mapping.	DPW	DoEnv, UCIS, UCSWCD, UCHD	Information Session/Workshop	3/1/2009
Support storm drain stenciling of Municipal infrastructure in MS4 area	UCSWCD	DPW, DoEnv, UCSWCD	Report # of drains stenciled	Continuous
Support Outfall Structure- Monitoring	DPW	UCIS, UCSWCD, DoEnv, UCHD	Track outreach to towns	Continuous
Identify funding opportunities for Stormwater Management Program Mapping	DoEnv	DPW, UCSWCD, Planning	Information to Coordinated Departments, Applications as appropriate	Continuous

## **WORK AREA #3- SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Key Message**

Reducing our consumption of energy and natural resources is not only environmentally responsible but often also economically responsible. For this current Environmental Plan, we have focused our sustainability initiatives around four areas that will serve as a catalyst for additional improvements in the future. These areas include: energy policy, climate protection, recycling and procurement.

### **CONTEXT**

Ulster County commands and consumes considerable material and energy resources to run its necessary operations. However, a significant opportunity exists to alter our consumption patterns in order to conserve energy, improve energy efficiency, and reduce overall waste generation. The Division of Buildings and Grounds within Public Works has made many initial inroads in this area including energy audits, use of green cleaning products, and switching to energy conserving products and techniques in buildings. The Department of the Environment believes that Ulster County government is ready to build and expand on the many initial successes in sustainable practices implemented.

For example, the development and adoption of a comprehensive Energy Policy for Ulster County Government has the potential to positively contribute to climate protection. It could help to systematically reduce energy demand beginning with ongoing county operations, save significant financial resources, contribute to enhanced environmental quality, and provide the leadership necessary to encourage our local communities to take responsibility and act accordingly.

### **OBJECTIVES FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Objectives**

- S1 - Facilitate the research, development and implementation of a comprehensive Energy Policy for UC Government that will reduce energy demand of county operations and save money.
- S2 – Support the Global Warming Advisory Committee.
- S3 – Assess and improve material use and recovery by UC Government.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Coordinated</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>ENERGY CONSERVATION</b>				
Complete a draft Energy Policy including a policy rationale and implementation strategy.	DoEnv,	DPW, Global Warming Adv Committee	Policy	12/1/2008
Begin to develop a "Smart Offices" campaign to educate county employees about energy conservation. <sup>1</sup>	DoEnv,	DPW, CCE	Initial program scope document	10/15/2008
Establish a range of energy conservation projects with financing mechanisms.	DoEnv	DPW	Initial guidance document and updates	1/1/2009
Determine the feasibility of a "green power" demonstration project, partnering with The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) and utilizing a county facility.	DoEnv, DPW	Planning	Memo to UC Env. Committee, UC Public Works Committee	12/1/2008
Review local government energy conservation efforts in NYS and within the region; compare programs and evaluate relative ease and cost.	DoEnv, Planning	DPW	Initial guidance document and updates	10/1/2008
Produce an Energy Policy Rationale and Implementation Strategy document. This document will support the development of an energy policy with measurable goals.	DoEnv, Planning	DPW	Rationale and Implementation Plan	12/15/2008
<b>CLIMATE PROTECTION</b>				
Select a framework (ICLEI or Climate Registry) for evaluating the implications of climate change within Ulster County; provide program development assistance to support the Global Warming Advisory Committee (GWAC) in this effort.	DoEnv	DPW, GWAC	Recommendation to GWAC and the UC Env. Committee on preferred method	11/1/2008
Identify funding sources to help the county address climate change mitigation planning.	DoEnv, Planning	DPW		Continuous
Place Climate Protection web resources on county website.	DoEnv	UCIS, GWAC	Website Information	3/1/2009
Train the trainers-develop a workshop on climate protection program development for interested educators (GWAC).	DoEnv	CCE, UCHD, GWAC	Workshop	8/1/2009
<b>RECYCLING PROGRAM</b>				
Conduct a survey of county employee recycling habits	DoEnv	UCPW, UCRRA <sup>2</sup>	Report on Survey Results	2/1/2009
Establish a baseline recycling rate for county buildings	DoEnv, UCPW	UCRRA <sup>2</sup>	Rates	2/1/2009
Develop increased participation benchmarks to capture additional recyclable materials.	DoEnv	DPW; UCRRA <sup>2</sup>	Benchmarks	3/15/2009
Develop an initiative to increase county-wide institutional recycling rates and recycling awareness.	DoEnv	DPW, CCE, UCRRA <sup>2</sup>	Program planning document	Summer 2009
<b>GREEN PROCUREMENT</b>				
Research Green Procurement Policies and Procedures and produce guidance document.	DoEnv	UC Purchasing Department <sup>3</sup>	Initial guidance document and updates	1/1/2009; Continuous

<sup>1</sup> Pending legislative approval of UC Energy Policy

<sup>2</sup> UCCRA is not a Coordinated Department but has expressed eagerness to work with the DoEnv as a partner on this project

<sup>3</sup> UC Purchasing is not a Coordinated Department but would be consulted on this project

**WORK AREA #4- NATURAL RESOURCES****Key Message**

There is a great need within the County to improve the coordination around, and ability of, the County, local municipalities and residents to make planning and land use decisions that protect critical natural resources in Ulster County. In order to protect important natural resources and encourage smart development in suitable areas, we need to be able to adequately identify and characterize our natural resources and build our capacity to use GIS as a tool to do so.

**CONTEXT**

Natural resource management and protection is a large and complicated undertaking. It requires data characterizing resources, an understanding of threats and trends, current scientific understanding, and serious coordination at the local, county and state levels. It builds on and requires the work of many non-profit, advocacy and community groups. It is a large undertaking. There are a few specific roles the Department of the Environment can play that will help coordinate the efforts and interests of the County and also build capacity of other organizations to do successful natural resource planning.

First, the County is in an excellent position to provide an updated and expanded Natural Resource Inventory (NRI). An NRI is a computer based map inventory that provides information necessary for decision making, (like that needed for the Open Space Partnership) and gives municipalities a powerful tool to improve their own decision making capacity. The NRI is an ideal opportunity to link County capabilities and resources with municipal needs. The Department of the Environment views the NRI as a keystone effort in this Work Area.

Second, the Department of the Environment plays an important role in other regional resource planning and watershed planning efforts. The County, through its infrastructure, planning responsibilities, and other regulatory responsibilities, is a key stakeholder in many different regional resource efforts. The Department of the Environment is a logical party to participate in many of these planning efforts. We can coordinate and represent County interests in natural resource planning and ensure that the appropriate parties are informed of activities.

Third, the Department has technical expertise in natural resource planning and is well suited to serve as a link between state level efforts (and other larger efforts) and municipal activities. This is another way in which the Department of the Environment can support municipalities and other local efforts by building their capacity with tools and information.

Effective natural resource planning is dependent on information and informed decision making. We believe the Department is in an excellent position to coordinate natural resource efforts within the county, build the capacity of others, and to be a point for improved communication. These are all important efforts to achieve effective natural resource planning.

## OBJECTIVES FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

### Objectives

- NR1- Update the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) GIS database. Explore ways to make that information more accessible to local land use decision makers.
- NR2- Act as a technical resource for partners engaged in Natural Resource Planning. Represent and advocate for the County in funding and projects.
- NR3- Support the Open Space plan by providing data necessary to prioritize acquisition (NRI) and research guidance for interpreting that data.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

Actions	Lead	Coordinated	Deliverable	Date
<b>1. Natural Resource Inventory</b>				
Seek Grant Funding to Support the NRI update- NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program	DoEnv	UCIS, Planning	Completed Grant Application	June 27, 2008 (completed)
Update the NRI database	DoEnv	UCIS, Planning, UC EMC, UCSWCD	Geodatabase File	10/1/2008
Review and inventory County water resource data.	DoEnv, UCHD		Summary Report	3/1/2009
Conduct Needs Assessment/Survey of Municipalities.	DoEnv	EMC	Report	1/1/2009
Expand NRI datasets		DoEnv, Planning, UCHD	Updated Geodatabase files	4/1/2009
Make data available on a web based platform	UCIS	DoEnv	Web Application	8/1/2009
Coordinate ongoing GIS activities	UCIS	DoEnv	Reconvene GIS Coordinating Committee	Continuous
<b>2. Watershed Planning</b>				
Represent County in local watershed planning	DoEnv	UCSWCD, Planning, UCHD	NA	Continuous
Identify funding for county interests, apply as applicable	DoEnv	Planning, EMC, UCSWCD, UCHD	Information to Coordinated Departments, Applications as appropriate	Continuous
<b>3. Open Space Planning</b>				
Participate in the Open Space Partnership	DoEnv, EMC, Planning	NA	NA	Continuous
Support prioritization through NRI development	DoEnv, Open Space Partnership	EMC, Planning	Updated Geodatabase	6/1/2009
Research acquisition prioritization for guidance document	DoEnv, Open Space Partnership	EMC, Planning	Report	6/1/2009

**HOW THIS PLAN WILL BE APPLIED**

For each of the Work Areas detailed in this report, the Department of the Environment will be convening and facilitating a Work Area Team. The Work Area Teams will be comprised of key personnel in the appropriate lead and coordinated departments listed in each implementation plan. The Work Area Teams will discuss, guide and accomplish the items in the implementation plan. Team meetings, similar to Coordinated Department Meetings, will be a forum for enhanced communication and coordination. In addition, the Work Area Team focused on Natural Resources will primarily be devoted to the use of GIS in natural resource related planning by the County. The Coordinated Departments have expressed a strong desire for improved and enhanced coordination of GIS related matters.

This plan will be used to guide the work of the Department of the Environment from September of 2008 through August of 2009. In order to address issues of relative importance, the Department of the Environment along with the Coordinated Departments will prioritize projects and implementation activities. We realize that because of the nature of our role as a coordinating department, we will inevitably be involved with other important and pressing projects which are not included in this plan during this time period. Six months after this plan is finalized we will review our progress in achieving the goals set out in the plan. We will document any additional projects which we are subsequently involved in and provide an update memorandum for the Coordinated Departments and the Environmental Committee of the Legislature.

**PLAN REVIEW PROCESS**

The Environmental Plan, as per local law establishing the Department, will be submitted to the Ulster County Legislature. In future years, the Environmental Plan will include a review of the progress of the Department to the goals and the Action Plan items in the previous year's plan. Comments and suggestion are valuable at any time. Please contact the Department of the Environment via phone (338-7287), email ([environment@co.ulster.ny.us](mailto:environment@co.ulster.ny.us)) or send comments to the attention of the Department of the Environment, PO Box 1800, Kingston, NY 12402.

**Appendix A-  
List of Coordinated Departments and their  
Major Environmental Responsibilities**

**ULSTER COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Stream Bank Stabilization and Remediation
- Stream Corridor Riparian Buffer Establishment and Maintenance
- Wetlands Preservation and Restoration
- Wildlife Habitat Preservation and Establishment
- Forestry Best Practices and Protection (consult with NYSDEC)
- MS4 and non-MS4 Stormwater Erosion and Sediment Control Assessment and Best Management Practices
- Groundwater Protection (Support Capacity to UC Health Dept. and NYSDEC on As-Needed Basis)
- Flood Response and USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Program
- Pesticide and Herbicide Controls - Agriculture and Forestry through Best Management Practices
- Invasive Species Identification and Control
- Biodiversity Planning through USDA Programs in Consultation with NYSDEC
- Open Space Planning (Support Capacity to Both UC Planning Dept. and County Agricultural Farmland Protection Board, Providing Input and Assistance on an As-Needed Basis)
- Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Assessment, Planning and Implementation of Best Management Practices
- Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Sharing Programs (USDA) and Grants to Implement AEM Projects
- Homeowner Assistance for Slope Stabilization, Critical Area Planting Recommendations, Drainage, Ponds and Permitting
- Municipal Assistance for Mapping, Erosion and Sediment Control, Stabilization and Permitting as Needed
- Bareroot Tree and Shrub and Fish Stocking Programs

**ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Prepare and Submit Annual report of State of County's Environment to the Legislature
- Prepare a Plan for the Protection of County's Environment and natural Resources
- Develop and Maintain an Inventory of Open Space, Marshes, Wetlands and Natural Resources
- Advise Municipalities on Best Management Practices (BMP) in Regard to Environmental Resources
- Recommend Ecologically Sound Planning Methods to County and Municipalities
- Develop Education and outreach Programs for Wetlands Identification and Protection, Stormwater Control, Biodiversity Planning and Stream Monitoring
- Develop a Plan to Write Grants for Inter-Municipal Environmental Programs
- Provide Advice on Developing BMPs for Surface and Groundwater Management

## **CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ULSTER COUNTY**

### Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Water quality and pesticide use for farm and garden
- Soil tests, plants and insect identification
- Invasive species control
- Best Management Practices for agricultural soils and crops
- Integrated Pest Management and Organic Agriculture Methods
- Environmental science, citizen science and GIS for adults and youth
- Environmental and biodiversity issues for adults and youth  
Youth environmental leadership on sustainable household practices, watershed monitoring and climate change
- Support for youth gardening activities in schools, clubs and communities
- Stream management planning and education in the Ashokan Watershed  
Effective wildlife damage mitigation techniques for farmers, homeowners and businesses
- Principles of water wise gardening that can reduce pollution by conserving water using demonstration gardens in a hands-on practical method
- Adoption of stormwater management practices on residential properties using a demonstration rain garden.
- Composting and demonstrating the different methods using model and actual composters on-site in our gardens
- Outreach gardening booths at local fairs, festivals, farmers markets and events that allow for one on one interaction with the public
- Annual workshops that address all types of home gardening issues and distribution of learning materials
- Outreach on alternative energy for agriculture
- Energy efficiency for agriculture and consumers
- Facilitate purchase of development rights and ag district law to protect agricultural land base

## **ULSTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

### Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Water Supply and Wastewater Permitting and Testing - Public and Private
- Restaurant / Food Sanitation
- Migrant Housing Water and Sewage
- Beach / Pool / Campsites / Parks Water Cleanliness (Temporary Residences)
- Chemical Spills
- Hazardous Waste Storage
- Environmental Health Assessment
- Communicable Disease – Including Water Borne, and Vector Transmitted (eg Rabies and Lyme)
- Refuse and Sludge Haulers and Disposal Sites
- Collaboration with NYS DEC and NYC DEP
- Environmental Health Education

## **ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

### Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Comprehensive Planning
- Referral Responsibility under General Municipal Law
- Technical Assistance to Municipalities and the Legislature
- Implementation of Various County Planning Documents

## **ULSTER COUNTY INFORMATION SERVICES**

### Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Disposal of Technology Related Equipment in Compliance with NYS DEC and Federal Regulations
- Provide Infrastructure for the Department of the Environment (and other County Departments) to Operate, including Telephones, Communications, Computer Equipment and Services
- Coordinate and Develop County-Wide GIS Hardware, Software, Training and Database standards to facilitate inter- and intra- Agency Collaboration, Compatibility, and Data Sharing
- Provide Technical Recommendations and Consulting Services to County Departments and Municipalities on GIS and other Environmentally Related Technology Projects
- Design and Develop Business Applications to Address the Environmentally Related Operational Needs of County Departments

## **ULSTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

### **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS DIVISION**

#### Major Environmental Responsibilities

- Maintain MS4 Controls on all County Run Operations
- Follow Pesticide and hazardous Materials Notification Guidelines in all County Run Operations
- Follow Storage and Use Guidelines for all Chemical Products
- Follow Non-Stormwater Discharge Controls for all County Run Operations
- Follow MS4 Guidelines and Controls for all County Run Operations
- Monitor and maintain MS4 Stormwater Records for County Operations
- Emergency Response to Chemical Spills in Municipal Operations
- Oversee Energy Audits - Current Operations
- Incorporate “Green Building” Criteria in all Future Operations

### **HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES DIVISION**

#### Major Environmental Responsibilities

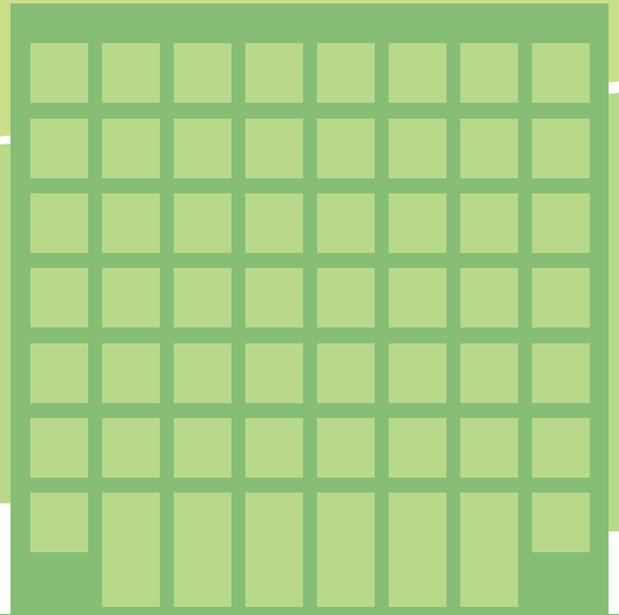
- Comply with SPDES regulations on Construction, Repair and Reconstruction of Roads, Drainage Systems and Bridges.
- Post Construction Inspection and Remediation for Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations
- NPDES and SPDES Permits
- Flood Management and Emergency Response
- Perform Environmental Review of and Apply for Permits for Construction Projects Progressed by UCDPW.











## GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

# Climate Action Plan

ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK  
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1-2019





**GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS**

**Climate  
Action  
Plan**

**ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK**  
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1-2019

The lesson which life constantly repeats  
is to 'look under your feet.'

You are always nearer to the divine and  
the true sources of your power than you think.

The lure of the distant and the difficult  
is deceptive.

The great opportunity is where you are.

Do not despise your own place and hour.

Every place is under the stars.

Every place is the center of the world.

— JOHN BURROUGHS

# Message from the Ulster County Executive Patrick K. Ryan

**Ulster County** is a truly remarkable place. From the wilderness of the highest Catskill peak, to the Hudson River shore and from the cliffs of the Shawangunk ridge to our farm lands and valleys, it is not hard to see why generations have been drawn to this landscape for recreation as well as inspiration. However, there is a hard truth we must all face. The impacts of carbon pollution and global climate change are not just distant problems, their impacts are already being felt right here and now. For example, changes in temperature and storm frequency are impacting our homes, livelihoods and our natural communities. Given what we know, we must wonder whether future generations will have the same opportunity to experience this jewel we call Ulster County.

In Ulster County we do our best to show others that we can do things differently in government. We can be leaders. We can change the course of government. And that change, hard as it may be, will not only benefit us, but will show the way for others in similar circumstances and benefit the future generations that call Ulster County home.

This document, the Climate Action Plan for Ulster County Government Operations, charts a new path for our operations. Implementing this plan will allow us to continue our net carbon neutral government operations and further meet energy conservation and generation goals, doing our very best to curb carbon pollution. However, implementing this plan also builds on a process that allows the county government to make systemic and integrated improvements to operations necessary to sustain lasting change. It is a roadmap to a goal as well as a process to create a culture that embraces change.

The environmental achievements of County government and the greater community are substantial. However, we need to do more to protect this precious place we call home and do our part to show others that the tough choices needed to address climate change are obtainable.

The quote from John Burroughs, opposite, one of our country's most famous naturalists and a long time Ulster County resident, truly bridges the generations. The "Seer of Slabsides," who found his inspiration and solace in the woods of Ulster County, reminds us that real change starts with us—that to solve even the biggest, most daunting challenges, we start at home. Climate change has been called the greatest challenge of our generation. Please help me in rising to this challenge, starting with the opportunity that is beneath our feet, in this home we call Ulster County. ■

# ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

244 Fair St., P.O. Box 1800, Kingston, New York 12402

Telephone: 845-340-3800

Fax: 845-334-5724

PATRICK K. RYAN  
*County Executive*



MARC RIDER  
*Deputy County Executive*

## EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1-2019

### REGARDING THE COUNTY'S USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE YEARS 2019 AND 2020

**WHEREAS**, the County of Ulster has a clear governmental interest in protecting the environment and human health within the County and beyond; and

**WHEREAS**, overwhelming consensus exists among the world's leading climate scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), regarding the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon pollution including a rapid and unprecedented increase in atmospheric temperatures; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of the County to accelerate the reduction of carbon pollution by maximizing its usage of locally generated renewable energy, reinforcing its commitment to protect the environment and human health in Ulster County and beyond; and,

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section C-25(B) of the Ulster County Charter, the Ulster County Executive has the power and duty necessarily implied or incidental thereto to "supervise, direct and control the administration of all departments" of the County; and,

**WHEREAS**, starting in 2014, Ulster County has purchased 100% of its electricity from renewable energy sources; and,

**WHEREAS**, this environmental leadership, commitment to renewable energy and net carbon neutral government operations has been recognized by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency; and,

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section C-74(B)(2) of the Ulster County Charter and Section A16-1(B)(2)(a) of the Ulster County Administrative Code, the Purchasing Director has the authority and the discretion to execute utility contracts.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, PATRICK K. RYAN**, County Executive of the County of Ulster, in accordance with the aforementioned and in furtherance of my statutory duties, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Department of Purchasing, in close coordination with the Department of the Environment, to ensure that for the years of 2019 and 2020, 100% of the County's electricity is purchased directly from local renewable energy sources or by obtaining Green-e Energy certified Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs).
2. Ulster County shall endeavor to continue to operate a net carbon neutral government and furthermore decrease greenhouse gas emission associated with its operations (through conservation, efficiency, on-site/local renewable generation) by 25% by 2025 and 80% by 2050 using the County's 2012 greenhouse gas emission inventory as a baseline.
3. Ulster County shall endeavor to supply 100% of its annual building and fleet electricity usage from locally generated renewable energy sources by the year 2030.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the Department of Environment, in close coordination with the Departments of Purchasing, Planning and Public Works, to implement the June 2019 Climate Action Plan for county government operations to meet the County's carbon emission reduction goals, drive deployment of clean technology and improve climate resilience.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the Department of the Environment Coordinator to act as the Climate Smart Communities Coordinator for government operations.
6. Ulster County government shall support ways to decrease energy use, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and increase the use of green power across our community and sets a goal of decreasing community wide greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 (below 1990 levels) using the regional GHG emissions inventory as a baseline.
7. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until otherwise superseded or revoked.

The County of Ulster



Patrick K. Ryan, County Executive

Dated: June 18, 2019  
Kingston, New York



# GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS Climate Action Plan

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# Acknowledgements

The Ulster County Government Operations Climate Action Plan was prepared by the Ulster County Department of the Environment (UCDoE) from 2018–2019.

The UCDoE would like to thank all the County departments and staff who participated in the planning process and provided feedback on this plan including the Planning Department, Public Works Department, Purchasing Department, Ulster County Area Transit, Information Services Department, Office of the Ulster County Sheriff, Emergency Management,

Health and Mental Health Department, Office of Economic Development and Office of Employment and Training.

Special thanks to all those that reviewed and submitted comments on the draft document including: the Ulster County Environmental Management Council, the Ulster County Climate Smart Committee, Hudson Valley Regional Council Clean Energy Communities staff, Climate Action Associates staff, and NYS DEC Office of Climate Change staff. Fabia Wargin Design provided graphic design services.



Amanda LaValle, Mandy Wolfson, and Nick Hvozda of the Ulster County Department of the Environment.



# Introduction

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Municipal governments provide a wide variety of important and essential services, but in so doing, consume valuable resources including equipment, supplies, and energy. This use of resources on a daily basis comes at costs to both the environment and to taxpayers as it consumes financial assets as well as resulting in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. In 2018, Ulster County spent \$3.12 million on utilities (fuel, electricity and heating) and emitted 9,238 metric tons of greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>e).



**The scientific consensus is clear and unwavering. The burning of fossil fuel has increased atmospheric greenhouse gas levels and is the leading driver of climate change. This document, a Climate Action Plan (CAP) for Ulster County government operations, focuses on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions due to government operation. It also prioritizes actions which save tax payer dollars and meet multiple needs and objectives within County government.**

**U**lster County government has made substantial achievements in environmental sustainability and climate action, including operating a net carbon neutral county government operation. However, within Ulster County Government we believe there is a role for this plan in both strengthening and focusing our efforts to achieve measurable reductions in the energy use and emissions associated with our operation.

In addition, this Climate Action Plan sets a clear path forward to meeting the directives of the County Executive and County Legislature to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with operations by 25% by 2025, purchasing 100% renewable energy for government operations, and operating a carbon neutral government operation. It is important to note though that offsets are not counted as actual reductions in emissions, or as progress toward GHG reduction goals. The GHG accounting in this inventory report assumes the absence of all offsets.

## Background

Ulster County is a mid-sized New York county with a population of 180,000 located in the mid-Hudson Valley. The County enjoys a diverse landscape with remarkable natural features including over forty miles of Hudson River shoreline, the Shawangunk Ridge, and the Catskill Mountains. These natural resources have significance far beyond the borders of Ulster County. Ulster hosts two City of New York water supply reservoirs as well as significant acreage in both the City of New York Water Supply Watershed and the Catskill Park. Contained within this 1,161 square miles are globally significant forest habitats in the Shawangunk Ridge and the Catskill Forest, which are home to numerous rare, threatened and endangered species, hundreds of miles of mountain streams, the Hudson River Estuary, as well as regionally significant agricultural and recreational resources.

Ulster County government employs approximately 1,200 full-time staff and manages an operating budget of approximately \$330 million. Ulster County is located in the Cold Climate Zone as defined by the US Department of Energy and in International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) Climate Zone 6. From 2012 to 2018, Ulster County had an average of 5,699 heating degree days (HDD) and 842 cooling degree days (CDD) annually. Like other municipal governments, Ulster County provides a diverse range of services to the community, including road and bridge maintenance, social services, law enforcement,

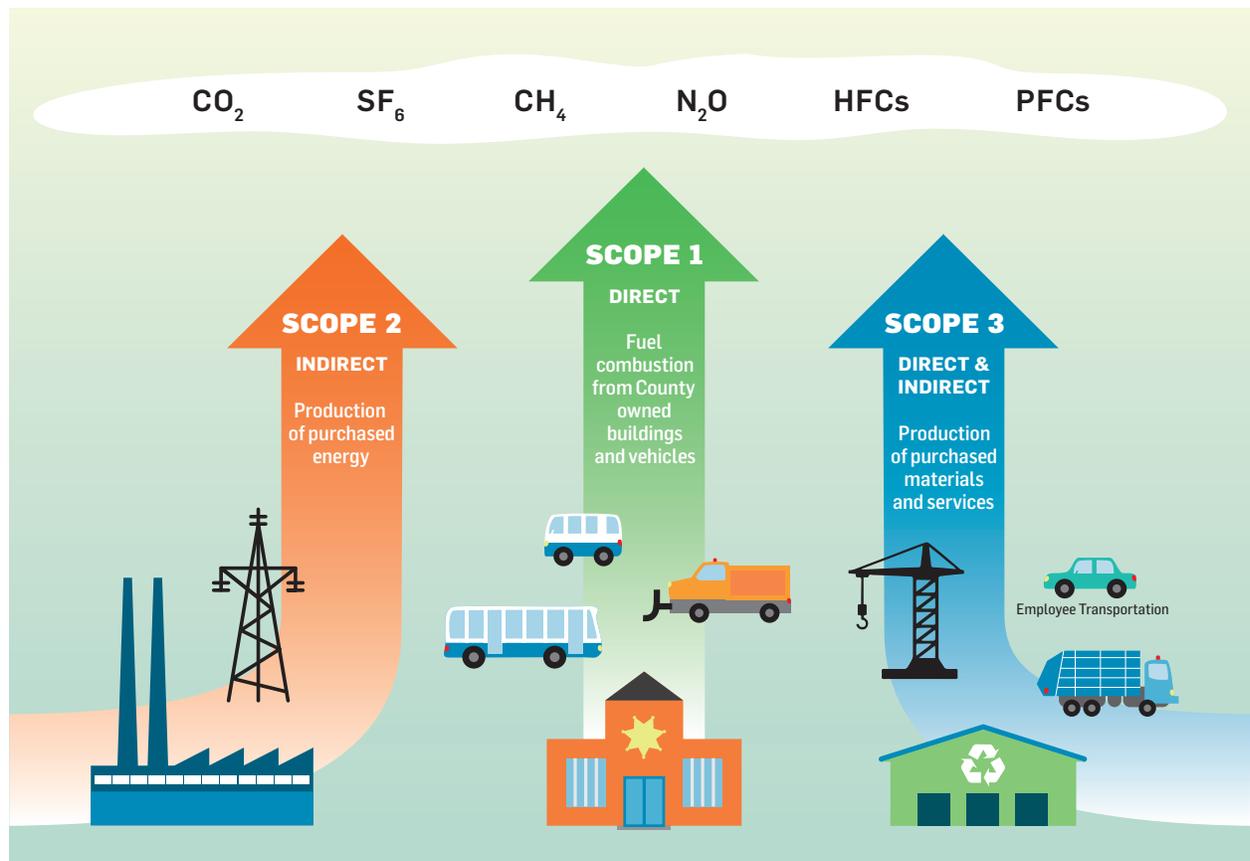
and public health services. The majority of government functions are funded through property tax and other tax dollars.

## Plan Focus

This plan focuses directly on Ulster County government operations in order to identify ways to reduce energy consumption, increase renewable energy generation, and offset any impacts of the remaining fossil fuel combustion. This plan focuses solely on reducing GHG emissions attributed to Ulster County government operations. The focus areas and actions contained within are

targeted primarily toward reducing Scope 1 (Direct) and Scope 2 (Indirect) emissions (Figure 1). However, measures that quantify and reduce Scope 3 emissions, such as employee commutes, are also included.

The most immediate goal, as reiterated in Executive Order 1 of 2019, is to reduce GHG emission by 25% (of our baseline) by 2025. This CAP includes a list of actions which will enable us to meet and exceed this goal. Also included in this CAP is some analysis of reductions necessary to meet the 2050 goal of reducing GHG associated with operations by 80%.



**Figure 1.** Operational Boundaries of GHG Emissions (World Resources Institute)

Planning to both mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change is critical; actions to mitigate and adapt to the likely impacts of climate change will be addressed starting in 2020 through the Ulster County Climate Change Adaptation & Resiliency Planning Project, which will yield a climate change vulnerability and resilience plan (see Section VI for additional discussion). As such, climate change adaptation strategies and actions are not included in this plan.

**The emphasis of this plan on efficiency of use and conservation of energy for county government operations can reduce energy expenses and increase efficiency of operations, allowing money and staff time to be directed to other important efforts. It can also result in improved comfort for employees and improved local air quality which has public health benefits. In addition, Ulster County has been successful to date in leveraging utility programs, grant funds and other opportunities to implement energy conservation measures. This plan will further allow Ulster County to continue to take advantage of these unique opportunities as they become available.**

Although the recommendations of this plan are generally framed in terms of GHG emissions reductions, there are multiple benefits of implementing this plan to the County, taxpayers and the greater public.

## Plan Framework

This plan consists of four main components (Figure 2). Each component represents

a distinct body of work or programmatic element portions of which have already been completed or are currently being undertaken. Together these components form a comprehensive summary of our past actions, our strategy for moving forward, as well as a list of projects which will directly lead to a quantifiable reduction in GHG emissions.

The first component is the Environmental Leadership & Ulster County Sustainability Guide which documents our progress and achievements. Ulster County has been recognized for its innovative approach to environmental action. This guide provides information and documentation on both how we have gone about this significant body of work and what has been accomplished. Certain actions that are the most relevant to this CAP are highlighted in the body of this report. The "Sustainability Guide" which includes a comprehensive compendium of actions is included as a link in Appendix D.

The second component of this Climate Action Plan is the Ulster County Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy. This strategy serves as both a framework for decision making as well as a guide for net carbon neutral operations. It is based in the principles of building science and engineering yet provides an approachable, understandable and consistent way to approach climate action measures. This section details the framework and provides further information on how Ulster County achieves net carbon neutral operations.

## Ulster County Climate Action Plan Framework

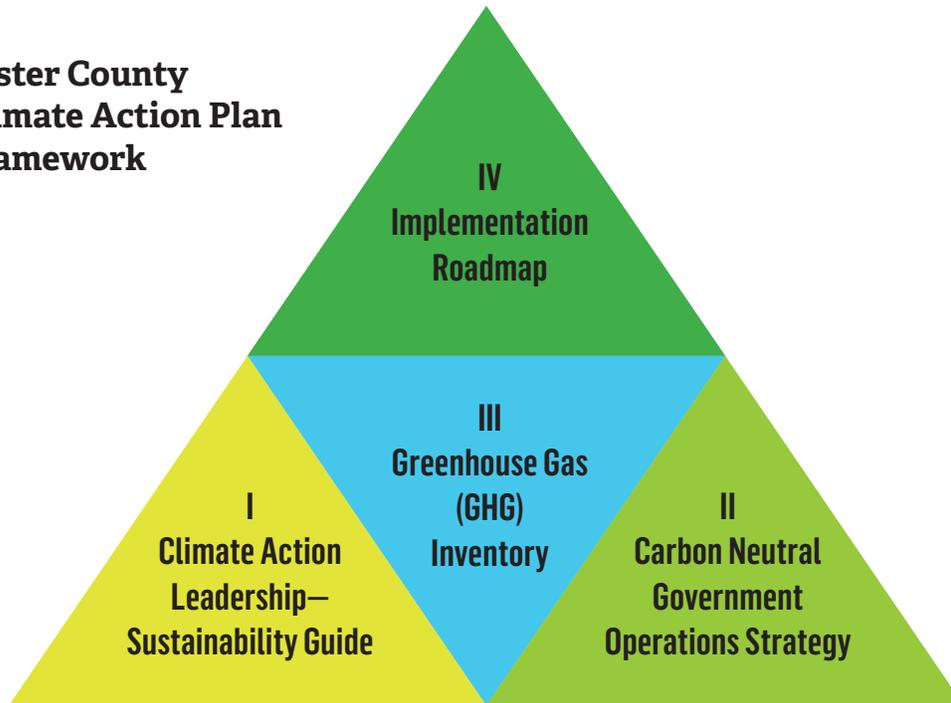


Figure 2.

The third component is the Greenhouse Gas Inventory. It is essential that any plan or action includes a comprehensive analysis of energy use by the County's operations. The County currently produces annual reports on both building and fleet vehicle energy use. These reports inform the GHG Inventory which is the baseline for our quantification of reduction and helps us to better understand the energy intensive and GHG intensive portions of our operation and evaluate GHG reduction actions.

The fourth and final component is the detailed list of potential projects which reduce energy use and increase the use of renewable energy. This section, the Implementation Roadmap, focuses on the major sectors of energy use within County government operations. The Carbon Neutral

Operations Strategy is applied as the framework for identifying and prioritizing action.

## Plan Development

This plan was developed in response to Executive Order (EO) No. 2-2018 Regarding the County's Use of Renewable Energy which states the following:

*It shall be the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, in close coordination with the Departments of Purchasing, Planning and Public Works, to develop and implement a Climate Action Plan for county government operations to further reduce the County's carbon footprint and to maximize its use of sustainable and renewable energy sources for its energy needs.*

The Department of the Environment met with relevant County departments to discuss opportunities for climate action initiatives throughout 2018. Since the scope of the plan is County Government operations, the coordination focused on the operational departments. These departments included: Planning Department, Purchasing Department, Department of Public Works, Office of the Ulster County Sheriff, Emergency Management, Health and Mental Health Department, Area Transit, Employment and Training and Information Services.

The meetings with departments played an important role in vetting potential actions items as well as providing operational context, information on capital planning initiatives, and various related planning initiatives.

## Public outreach and comment on this plan

The plan was released for public comment in the early spring of 2019. Since the plan is focused on Ulster County government operations, public review and participation in this plan was completed through outreach and discussion with two specific groups:

**1) Ulster County Environmental Management Council (UC EMC):** the EMC is composed of representatives from municipal level conservation advisory councils, environmental commissions and environmental boards. The EMC also has an equal number of at-large members

from Ulster County. The Ulster County EMC's mission is "to review and advise the county and local governments on present and proposed methods of using, protecting and conserving the environment for the benefit of all the people."

**2) Climate Smart Committee:** The Climate Smart Committee is a volunteer task force that promotes and supports climate action, mitigation and adaptation in the community. The Committee is designed to act as an advisory board or steering committee that advises and collaborates with the local government to accomplish plans, programs, and activities that are part of the Climate Smart Communities certification program. The task force consists of community members and municipal representatives.

Both the UC EMC and the Ulster County Climate Smart Committee serve as important conduits to environmental action at the municipal level in Ulster County. They are a way of discussing best practices as well as further interacting with local efforts in which this plan can bolster and catalyze ongoing local effort. Valuable comments were received from both groups and changes were incorporated into the final document.

Several public presentations about the draft plan were made: one to the regional Climate Action Planning Institute and one to a public information forum at Lifebridge Sanctuary. In addition, technical review comments were also received from NYS DEC Office of Climate Change staff, Hudson Valley Regional Council Clean Energy Communities staff, and Climate Action Associates. ■

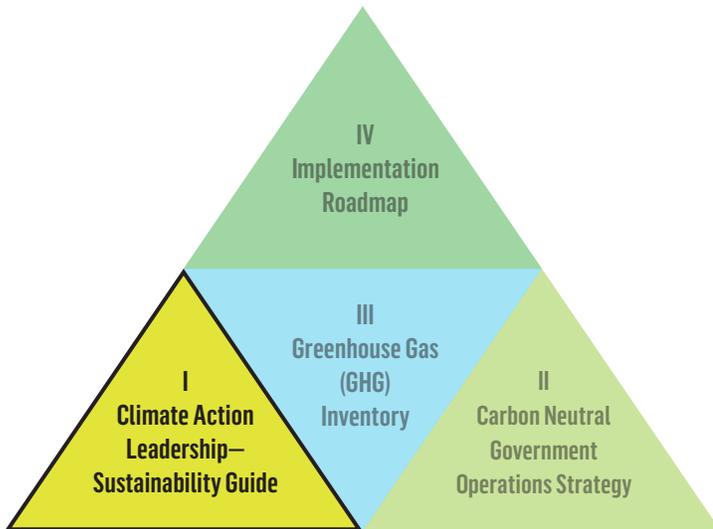


# Climate Action Leadership and Sustainability Guide

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The Hudson Valley and the Catskills have long been revered for their inspiring beauty and natural resources and the area is often considered the birthplace of the modern environmental movement. Ulster County in particular has a long-standing history of environmental action and a deeply rooted environmental ethos. It is not a surprise that municipal and county governments have also taken on this commitment to environmental sustainability in earnest.



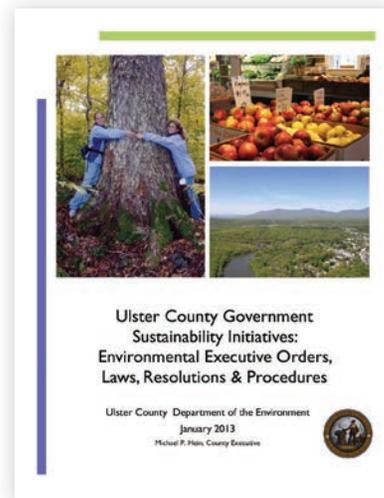


**T**he efforts of Ulster County Government to reduce GHG emissions and operate a carbon neutral government demonstrate a comprehensive examination of sustainability across our operation. The implementation demonstrates remarkable innovation in local government.

In 2008, the Ulster County Legislature passed an Energy Policy pertaining to county government operations. In 2010, a comprehensive ASHRAE Level 3 energy audit of County facilities was performed. Then in 2012, a GHG Inventory of government operations was completed. The combination of these documents served as an initial climate action plan for significant energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment at County facilities. Since 2008, the Department of the Environment has been successful in securing over \$2.8 million dollars in federal, state and utility company sponsored program funding to implement those projects and initiatives.

## The Ulster County Sustainability Guide

In 2013, the Ulster County Department of the Environment produced the *Ulster County Sustainability Guide*. The guide compiled a diverse set of policies, procedures, local laws and legislative resolutions addressing sustainability and environmental actions. This guide was meant to not only document the current initiatives and resolutions but also to provide an easy to use reference for other municipalities as they evaluate their sustainability and climate action initiatives. This guide has been updated to include actions through June of 2019 and is provided as a link in Appendix D to this Climate Action Plan.



## UC Department of the Environment

Another critically important element of climate action initiatives in Ulster County is a thorough consideration of how to plan for and implement environmental initiatives

in County government. When the complex and interconnected nature of environmental issues like climate change are considered, it's not a surprise that attempting to manage and address environmental issues at a County level often requires the action of multiple departments that draw on many different types of expertise. Local environmental issues regularly cross traditional County department boundaries. From a County government perspective, the challenge then becomes:

how do we effectively and efficiently integrate departments and individuals to address complex environmental issues?

The Ulster County Department of the Environment was created by Local Law # 17 of 2007, and with its creation, Ulster County embarked on an innovative way to meet the challenges of our modern environmental problems. The Department is responsible for coordinating programs and activities related to the environment across various County departments and agencies. The Department of the Environment is responsible for working with all the involved departments to increase efficiency and efficacy of projects with a variety of environmental implications. Department of the Environment responsibilities include supervising select environmental compliance responsibilities,



The Ulster County Department of the Environment

providing a forum for various departments to share information on environmental projects, providing technical assistance to departments, and helping departments characterize and address existing environmental needs. This helps the County to prevent duplication of services and ensures the County is balancing stewardship with financial accountability.

With this structural charge in mind, the Department of the Environment has historically been the convener for climate action related initiatives as well as for this Climate Action Plan. Executive Order 1-2016 directed the task of developing and implementing "a long term plan to further reduce the County's carbon footprint and to maximize its use of sustainable and renewable energy sources for its energy needs" to the Department of the Environment.

## Current Climate Initiatives

Following is an abbreviated list of actions and initiatives which are directly pertinent to this climate action plan, its development and its implementation.

## Community and Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals

Executive Order 1 of 2019 sets forth both government operation and community greenhouse reduction goals. The Ulster County Legislature, through Resolution 315 of 2019, affirmed this commitment creating it as County policy. The stated goal for government operation is that:

*Ulster County shall endeavor to operate a carbon neutral government and furthermore decrease greenhouse gas emissions associated with its operations (through conservation, efficiency, and on-site renewable generation) by 25% by 2025 and 80% by 2050 using the County's 2012 greenhouse gas emission inventory as a baseline.*

EO 1 of 2019 also states that:

*Ulster County government shall support ways to decrease energy use, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and increase the use of green power across our community and set a goal of decreasing community wide greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 (below 1990 levels) using the regional GHG emission inventory as a baseline.*

## NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Program—Certified Silver

Since its inception, the New York State Climate Smart Communities program has served as a guide for Ulster County's climate action initiatives. The Ulster County legislature passed Resolution Number 184 on August 16, 2011, adopting the Climate Smart Community pledge.

Ulster County has achieved Certified Silver status in the CSC program, a notable accomplishment. As of the drafting of this report there are 248 communities that have taken the Climate Smart Communities Pledge. Of those communities, only four have reached Silver, the highest certification level within the program. In addition to Ulster County, the City of Kingston has also achieved Silver certification status. Ulster County is the first County to have achieved Silver status.

The County was awarded two grants through the NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities



Ulster County Executive, Pat Ryan, signing Executive Order 1 of 2019.

Grant Program. The first grant contract was for \$261,000 for improvements to the UC Resource Recovery Agency organics recycling program including implementing a food waste diversion program at the UC Law Enforcement Center. The second grant agreement is funding the Ulster County Climate Change Resilience Planning effort which is underway.

The County continues to work towards implementing more of the identified actions in the CSC program and has used that program in part to guide actions identified and prioritized in the roadmap section of this Climate Action Plan.



## **NYSERDA Clean Energy Community Program**

In 2016, the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) launched a new program to encourage municipalities in NYS to implement clean energy actions. The program required the completion of at least four “high impact” actions to qualify.

Ulster County was the first municipality in New York State to complete the program and received a \$250,000 grant for energy efficiency improvement as a result. The Clean Energy Communities grant money was dedicated to improving the energy efficiency of the UC Law Enforcement Center, the building with the single largest energy consumption in the county’s portfolio.



## **100% Renewable Power**

Ulster County purchases 100% green power through onsite generation and the purchase of renewable energy certificates. The County started purchasing renewable energy at the 100% level in 2014 and has done so every year since. This has been at the direction of the County Executive in a series of Executive Orders and was recently adopted as Legislative policy. The most recent EO is found at the beginning of this plan, the prior EOs and new Legislative resolution are included in the Sustainability Guide for reference.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) named Ulster County as one of the leaders in green power use and environmental sustainability, recently ranking the County as the 26th largest green power user on their “Top 30 Local Government” list, which represents the 30 largest green power users among local governments in the Nation. In addition, the County was recognized as a 2015 Green Power Purchasing leader by US EPA.

## Ulster County Carbon Neutral Government Operations

Since 2015, Ulster County has purchased carbon offsets on the voluntary market to offset 100% of Scope 1 emissions as well as employee commutes (which are considered Scope 3 emissions) in addition to the Scope 2 emissions that are offset by the purchase of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). The directive to operate a carbon neutral government is included in Executive Order 1 of 2019.

### Large Scale Solar

In 2018, construction was completed at the closed former Town of Ulster landfill of a 1.9 mW solar installation. Through a power purchase agreement, Ulster County government is the single off-taker of the power produced by this installation and it provides locally generated, renewable energy for approximately 20% of the County's total

electricity consumption. It will produce approximately 2.36 million kwh a year of electricity which is the electricity required to power approximately 291 homes for one year. The County worked closely with Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency as they own and maintain the closed landfill property. The County recently announced plans to pursue another large scale solar installation to double the County's local generation. This brown-field site is known as the Quarryville site and is currently under design.

### Green Fleet Policy

The County developed a *Sustainable Green Fleet Policy*, enacted as local law, which requires: a comprehensive inventory of vehicles, fuel monitoring (including total fuel, average mpg, miles driven, vehicle function, estimated emission per mile),



Ulster County Solar Landfill Project

right-sizing and strategic deployment of more efficient and sustainable fuel vehicles. It further requires that 5% of the fleet will be Green Vehicles by 2020, and after 2020, 20% of new passenger vehicle purchases will be Green Vehicles. There is also required employee education on ecodriving techniques, and the policy stresses fuel conservation, fuel efficiency and the use of renewables.

As of September 2019, the County has deployed 17 plug-in hybrid vehicles and one all electric vehicle in the fleet. In addition, the County is expecting delivery of an additional three plug-in hybrid vehicles in 2019. The County exceeded the Green Fleet goal of 5% green vehicles in 2018, two years ahead of schedule.



Electric Vehicle Charging Station at the County Office Building Complex

## EV Charging Station Network

Ulster County operates a network of 17 charging stations at County owned facilities. These stations are powered by 100% renewable energy and are available to Ulster County fleet vehicles as well as employees, residents and the general public. This is an excellent example of how a sustainability initiative can provide local and regional benefits beyond those to county government operations. In 2018, the County hosted 3,967 electric vehicle charging sessions of which 3,165 were public (non-fleet) vehicles. These sessions resulted in the avoided consumption of 1,129 gallons of gas. The use of electricity

by fleet vehicles reduced County Scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions by 2.1 metric tons.

## Biodiesel Use

Starting in 2015, Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT) public transit buses have used a 5% biodiesel blend (B5) when operationally feasible. In 2018, UCAT used the B5 blend in its diesel-fueled transit vehicles approximately 54% of the time, reducing GHG emissions (CO<sub>2e</sub>) by 35.9 metric tons.

## Building Benchmarking

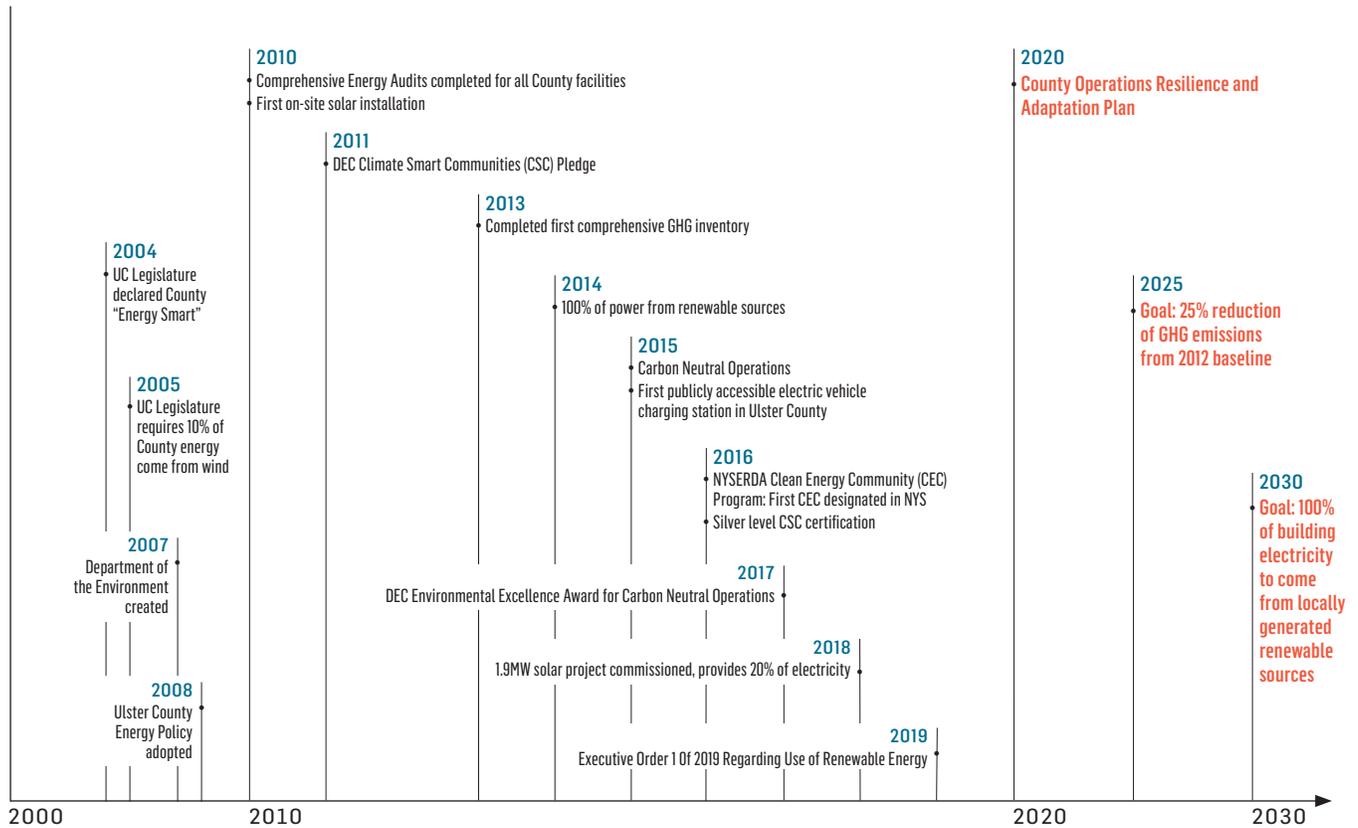
Resolution No. 447 of 2016 established “a policy to require annual public reporting of building energy consumption and benchmarking information for County Owned buildings.” Ulster County uses the EPA Portfolio Manager application

to benchmark its properties. The County Department of the Environment generates an annual benchmarking report which is made publicly available on the Department of the Environment's website.

### Building Energy Efficiency Measures

In 2010, using NYSERDA and Federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funding, Ulster County completed ASHRAE Level 3 audits of the County building portfolio, approximately one million square feet of building space. Since that time, the UC Department of Public Works has been implementing

the recommendations of the audit. In 2015, the County embarked on a major capital plan to complete a portion of the HVAC, lighting and building envelope improvements that were recommended in the 2010 audit. Resolution # 316 of 2015 committed \$2.5 million to complete this work, which is still ongoing. Another example of building efficiency measures that have been implemented are extensive interior and exterior LED lighting upgrades. Ulster County has completed LED retrofits (over five thousand bulbs) at County facilities. These improvements reduce the County's annual electricity demand by approximately 2,000,000 kwh/year. ■



Ulster County's Climate Action Leadership Timeline

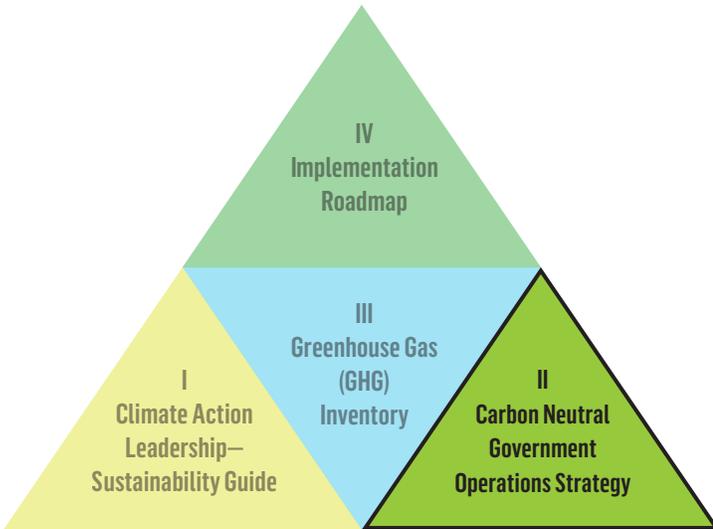


# Carbon Neutral Government Operations Strategy

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Ulster County has achieved a carbon neutral government operation through the purchase of carbon offsets in addition to generating renewable energy and purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs). Carbon offsets and RECs are one piece of our overarching strategy in which we commit to actual reductions in energy use and emissions to meet our goals. Over time, our goal is to reduce our energy demand, increase our use of locally generated renewable electricity, and lessen our reliance on carbon offsets and RECs.





**A**lthough more municipalities are sourcing their electricity from renewables, which is a significant achievement, purchasing renewable energy only offsets the electricity generation. It does not offset emissions associated with burning fuels for building heating or vehicle operation. The energy consumption and associated emissions from those operations can be significant. In 2018 Ulster County, electricity consumption contributed only 16% to our total emissions footprint; 84% of emissions resulted from the use of other fossil fuels. We are currently unaware of another New York municipality that offsets their emissions beyond those associated with electricity.

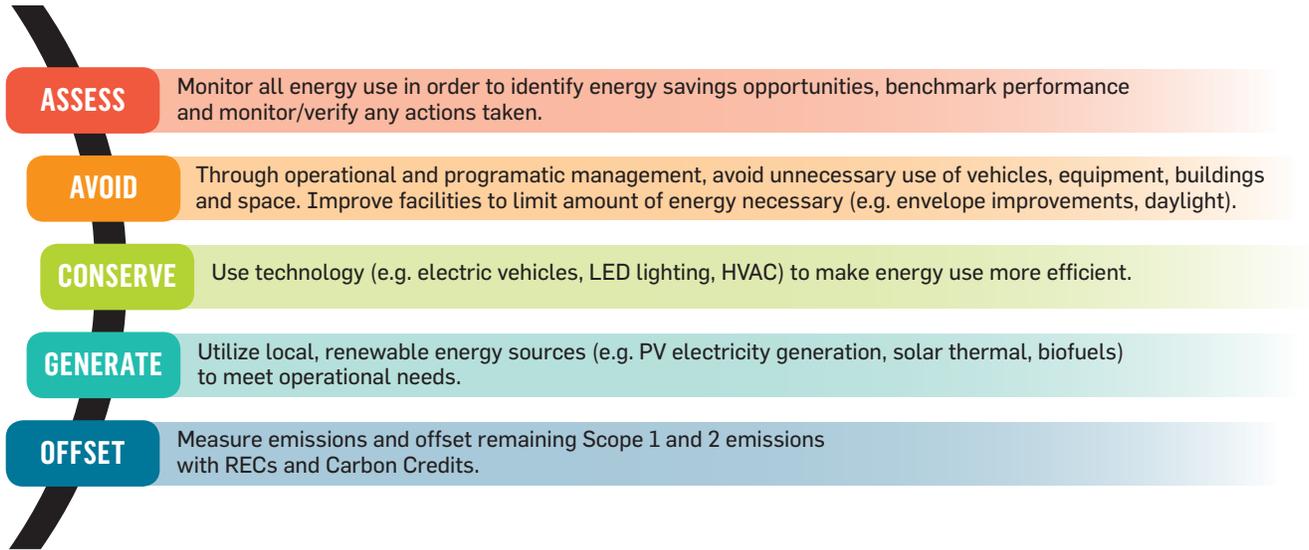
The results of the Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy are unique and have been recognized at the state and national level by the National Association of Counties, US Environmental Protection Agency, as well as the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

By design, the backbone of the strategy is a replicable method for examining energy use and carbon emissions at a municipal or organizational level. It also provides a prescriptive approach to reducing carbon emissions. The intent is that that by explicitly including this framework into decision making and communication, we not only ensure our best action, but enhance the organizational understanding of these concepts and their importance.

It is important to note that although Ulster County achieves a carbon neutral government operation through the purchase of offsets, we are simultaneously committed to achieving actual reductions in energy use and emissions to meet our goals.

The strategy is intended as a hierarchy of core principals, such as “don’t use more energy than necessary,” and “use energy efficiently if required.” Then, the strategy moves to the use of renewable energy (preferably as close to the demand source as possible). As a last step, it moves to using products such as Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and Carbon Credits to mitigate the remaining unavoidable emissions. Throughout, use and progress must be monitored and evaluated. It is an explicit goal in the framework to reduce the need for RECs and Carbon Credits over time. The steps of avoid, conserve and generate are also critically important because beyond operating a carbon neutral government, it also remains a goal that the County will reduce emissions through conservation, efficiency, and local renewable generation.

# The Ulster County Carbon Neutral Government Strategy



**Figure 3.** The Five Elements of the Strategy

This strategy is the articulation of fundamental concepts. This type of framework is not at all unfamiliar to building science professionals or to engineers. The elements in the strategy denote a basic progression which is essential in making sound decisions. However, in an often-complicated decision making environment, the County has chosen to make it explicit rather than an implicit framework in order to 1) underscore the importance of reducing energy use 2) demonstrate that any decision has been made within this greater context 3) keep focus on the operational tasks required to reduce the use of offsets to achieve carbon neutral operations.

## Assess

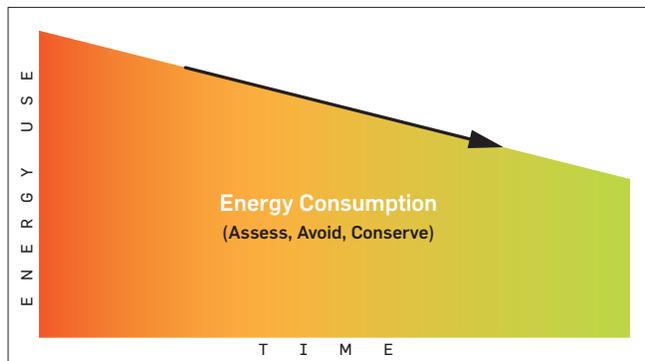
The backbone of any effort to reduce energy use or operate a carbon neutral operation is

to actively monitor all energy use. The Ulster County Department of the Environment, along with the Department of Public Works, tracks and monitors the County's energy use and emissions including buildings and all vehicles. The resulting reports are summarized in Section III as the Ulster County Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

These assessment data are critical in that they help provide necessary information for energy audits. These data are also used by Ulster County to monitor the performance of energy efficiency improvement measures. The accounting is also required to quantify any renewable generation, as well as the offsets necessary to achieve zero carbon emissions. Data downloads and tracking can be automated through working with vendors or utility providers in certain situations.

Some of the additional benefits of assessment and monitoring include:

- Providing an audit function helping to uncover billing errors or inappropriate use;
- Showing spikes in usage related to malfunctioning or improper use of equipment;
- Providing the necessary baseline for energy audits and equipment studies;
- Providing the necessary baseline for GHG emission reduction efforts; and,
- Helping quantify longer term cost/benefit of potential energy savings measures.



## Avoid

It is often said the most efficient use of energy is to not use it at all. Although this sounds simplistic, it is a critical first step and one that must be addressed.

The following examples describe ways the County can avoid energy use in accordance with this strategy:

- Consolidating operations to reduce the number of square feet necessary to conduct County business;

- Improving building envelopes to reduce the heating and cooling loads;
- Using building scheduling to ensure HVAC and lighting systems are not used when the building is unoccupied (e.g. temperature setbacks);
- Employing lighting sensors to shut off lights when not in use; and,
- Employing route-building software to help employees best consolidate and plan vehicle trips.

The benefits of “avoiding” expand to include the consolidation of operations which can reduce the cost of operation and maintenance. Reducing the energy demand of buildings often reduces the size and cost of any equipment (energy efficient or renewable) to be used. This can provide direct and indirect financial and energy saving benefits. Additionally, it can have ancillary benefits like added daylight and more airtight buildings which improve worker comfort and employee satisfaction.

The information on energy consumption and emissions has been used to support decisions regarding the County building stock and operations along with a facilities study which was conducted to determine which spaces were not being used efficiently. The County Legislature has supported efforts to reduce energy use by passing an energy policy as well as a requirement that new or renovated facilities meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Silver standards.

To further reduce energy use, County employees are trained and reminded to practice sustainable behavior, and are growing more conscious of daily habits—like turning off lights, computers and other equipment when not in use—which can yield substantial energy savings. In addition, the County created an employee guide on sustainable driving behavior which includes a portion on anti-idling and route optimization. County employees are given financial incentives for taking public transit, and are encouraged to ride-share, bike or walk to work whenever possible.

## Conserve

Where energy use must take place, the next step is to evaluate whether energy efficient technologies or opportunities are being properly utilized to reduce energy consumption.

Examples of energy efficiency include:

- Replacing fluorescent lighting with LED lamps
- Choose high efficiency HVAC equipment when making routine replacements

In 2010, a detailed investment grade energy audit of the County facilities was conducted. Since that time, the results have been continuously used to help determine energy-saving strategies. In addition, the County is currently in the process of producing “heating and cooling master plans” for both the UC Law Enforcement Center and the County Office Building, two of the larger energy users. These plans will provide

## Case Study: FLATBUSH ANNEX



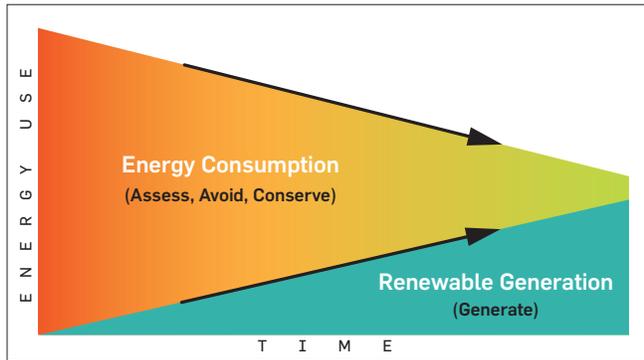
The former City of Kingston Alms House located off of Flatbush Avenue was constructed between 1872 and 1874. Ulster County purchased and occupied the building starting in 1954. In 2014, the County began to consolidate operations, notably relocating the Health and Purchasing Departments from Flatbush Annex to office spaces in existing properties, reducing the need to maintain full-time operations at the property. The County completed the sale of the building in 2018. This consolidation of government operations has reduced County GHG emissions by approximately 125 metric tons per year—a 2.7% reduction from the 2012 baseline for the Buildings and Other Facilities sector. Additionally, the consolidation saves County taxpayers at least \$60,000/year in avoided utility costs.

a detailed path forward to decrease the energy consumption and increase reliance on renewable energy at these locations.

In addition, since 2014, the County has replaced light fixtures with LED lights at 16 facilities, with estimated savings of over 2 million kilowatt-hours per year of energy use—a yearly savings to Ulster County taxpayers of approximately \$225,000.

The County continues to manage the fleet inventory to right-size vehicle purchases, use appropriate alternative and sustainable energy vehicles and reduce overall fuel consumption. All sedans purchased in 2019 will be hybrid plug-in electric vehicles. To support fleet operations, the County has installed 17 plug-in electric vehicle charging stations (a total of 34 plugs) throughout

the County. To date, this network has been available to employees and the public free of charge. Between when the first stations became operational in 2015 and the end of 2018, these stations have dispensed a total of 67 MWh of renewable electricity, avoiding approximately 17.5 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.



## Generate

While reducing energy demand to the lowest level feasible, the County intends to maximize the percentage of remaining energy use that comes from renewable sources. Renewable generation can significantly reduce emissions by reducing the need to purchase energy from fossil fuel derived sources. Increased local renewable generation also directly impacts the local electric grid through distributed generation, strengthening the local economy and workforce, and increasing resilience to fluctuations in energy markets. Generating renewable energy on site is the priority where possible. When not possible, purchasing renewable power from local sources is preferred and considered

local generation for the purposes of this plan. However, Ulster County does not consider the purchase of RECs to be generation.

The Generate element includes energy from these sources:

- On-site generation of electricity (e.g. solar pv, wind or hydro behind the meter);
- Purchasing electricity from local Community Distributed Generation (CDG) sites;
- Purchasing electricity via a locally generated, third party (power purchase) ownership arrangement;
- Remote net metering from a County owned or County controlled site;
- On-site combustion of solid biomass, or biomass derived fuels; and,
- Mobile combustion of biomass derived fuels.

Currently, the County uses renewable energy from the following sources.

**On-site solar PV** In 2010, the County installed its first PV solar array at the Ulster County Salt Storage Facility in New Paltz. To date this installation has generated in excess of 270,000 kWh. In 2018, a 1.9 mW solar installation, through a power purchase agreement, came online at the closed Town of Ulster Landfill. This solar array generates enough renewable power each year to supply approximately 20% of the County's electricity needs.

### Renewable biomass from biofuels

The County transit fleet uses a commercially-available biofuel blend whenever feasible.

# Beneficial Electrification

Beneficial electrification is a term for substituting electricity for fossil fuel combustion in energy end-use applications. Since it is more feasible to use renewable energy sources to produce electricity, converting transportation for example to renewably produced electricity power is seen as an effective way to move beyond fossil fuels and decrease carbon emissions.

*Emissions efficiency*, which is defined as “service units provided per metric ton CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions created,” is the most effective measure for Climate Action Plan conservation activities, as it compares the true climate cost of various technologies and energy sources with a common ratio. For buildings, the emissions metric is Btus of heat provided per MT CO<sub>2</sub>E or CO<sub>2</sub>e emitted by the heating system. For vehicles, the metric is miles traveled per MT CO<sub>2</sub>e emitted.

In most cases, electrification of services increases emissions efficiency. This is due to two trends:

- 1 Lowering GHG emissions rates in the power sector:** State mandates such as the New York Clean Energy Standard (70% renewable by 2030) ensure that the proportion of zero emissions power in the utility provided mix will continue to increase. This trend allows electrified capital equipment which is purchased today to become more emissions efficient over its lifetime, which is not possible for conventional fossil fuel burning equipment.

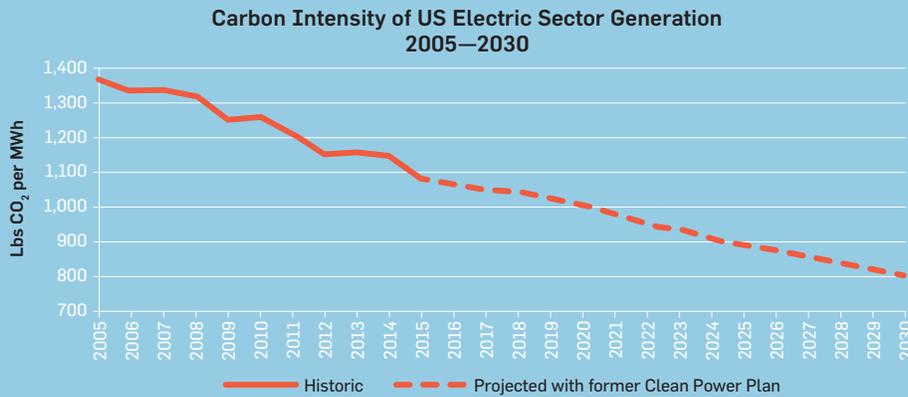


Figure 4. Carbon Intensity Trend <sup>1</sup>

- 2 Increased efficiency of electric end use equipment:** Heat pumps and electric vehicles are more efficient at using energy to meet end-use needs. As technology improves, they will be able to provide services across a wider range of operating conditions.

At recent average County energy rates, replacing fossil fuel heating with heat pump technology would have the following impacts:

Fuel Replaced	Emissions Change	Cost Change
Electrify Natural Gas	77% decrease	3% increase
Electrify Fuel Oil	85% decrease	38% decrease
Electrify Propane	82% decrease	33% decrease

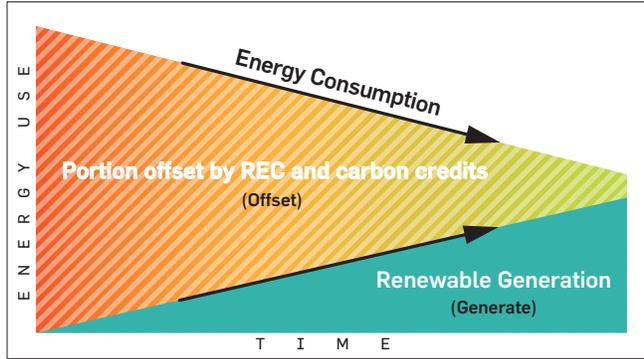
ASSUMPTIONS: average electric coefficient of performance COP of 3.0, natural gas combustion efficiency 94%, Fuel oil combustion efficiency 83%, propane combustion efficiency 87%

### Implications and Barriers for Implementation:

- The County should expect electricity usage to increase over time in order to meet GHG reduction goals.
- Electric technology is currently feasible for small scale substitution (i.e. passenger vehicles, residential air source heat pumps) but is more difficult and costly to apply to larger applications such as commercial office buildings or snow plowing trucks.
- Electric HVAC systems have higher capital costs, but equipment will yield emission savings over lifetime.
- Electrification will increase loads on electric grid infrastructure.

1 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1040619016301075?via%3Dihub>

Through the implementation of the Generate actions in this plan, the County will increase its capacity to generate energy onsite to supply its needs, and increase its usage of local renewable sources of energy.



## Offset

Since renewable energy cannot be generated on site or locally for all government operations, renewable energy credits (RECs) and carbon credit offsets must be purchased to ensure carbon neutrality.

- Renewable Energy Credits (RECs):**  
 The County purchases certified renewable energy credits certified by the firm Green-e Energy to offset 100% of its grid supplied electricity use. Generally, these credits take the form of the renewable attributes

created by wind power generation in the Midwest US. These credits offset only indirect (Scope 2) emissions.

- Carbon Credits:** A large portion of County emissions are generated through direct (Scope 1) energy sources—specifically mobile combustion for the operation of fleet vehicles and stationary combustion for building heating. For these Scope 1 sources, the County purchases carbon credits to offset emissions. These offsets are verified by a third-party certification firm which reviews the projects to ensure they meet standards such as additionality.

Offsets, as the final element of the County Carbon Neutral Operations strategy, are less preferable means of carbon neutrality. The technology currently does not exist to accomplish the diverse array of services that the County must provide under the banner of one of the previous elements. For example, there is not a commercially available electric snow plow truck on the market today (nor a biodiesel product that functions in extreme cold temperatures). However, the intent of this Climate Action Plan is to continue to reduce the quantity of offsets that the County must purchase each year to maintain carbon neutrality.

# The REC and Carbon Credit Market:

## What are they?

### How does one municipal purchaser help make a difference?

Organizations working to lower their emissions footprint have a variety of mitigation options at their disposal, including activities to reduce their direct emissions, activities to reduce indirect emissions like energy efficiency measures and switching to green power, and paying for external reductions. Knowing the differences between instruments like RECs and offsets is the first step to understanding their value.

### RECs RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATES

- Measured in megawatt hours (MWh)
- Convey use of renewable electricity generation; underlie renewable electricity use claims; and support renewable electricity development
- Can lower an organization's scope 2 emissions from purchased electricity
- Can claim to use renewable electricity from a low or zero emissions source
- Additionality tests not required.

#### COMMON TECHNOLOGIES



SOLAR      WIND      SMALL HYDRO      BIOMASS

### CARBON OFFSETS

- Measured in metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> or CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent
- Represent GHG emissions reductions; provide support for emissions reduction activities
- Reduce or "offset" an organization's scope 1 or 3 emissions, as a net adjustment
- Can claim to have reduced or avoided GHG emissions outside their organization's operations
- Additionality Test Required. Each project must ensure that it is beyond business as usual. Tests include legal/regulatory, financial, barriers, common practice and performance tests.

#### COMMON TECHNOLOGIES



LIVESTOCK BIOGAS      LANDFILL GAS      INDUSTRIAL GAS      SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

Both offsets and RECs represent the environmental benefits of certain actions that can help mitigate GHG emissions. Offsets and RECs, however, are fundamentally different instruments with different impacts, representing different criteria for qualification and crediting in the context of inventory or emissions footprint.

Over time, the money spent to buy either carbon offsets or RECs is an important finance stream to many of these types of technologies and projects. The development of the carbon credit and offset markets have been critical in helping to expand and accelerate the steep decline in the cost of renewable energy and other carbon capturing technologies. Even small municipal purchases can collectively help to provide the revenue sources necessary to deploy this technology.

*Adapted from US EPA Green Power Partnership. Offsets and RECs: What's the Difference*

## Future Action

The overall intent of the combined elements of the Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy, as depicted in the figures above is that, over time, the County's overall energy consumption will decrease (through *Avoid* and *Conserve* measures), the percentage of renewable energy will increase (through *Generate* measures), and the need to purchase RECs or Carbon Credits (*Offset* measures) will decrease while the County continues to operate a carbon neutral government. Over the life of this plan, the County will continue to improve the ability to track progress (through *Assess* measures) and ultimately mitigate emissions and increase operational reliance on locally produced renewable energy.

The cost of carbon credits, purchased to offset emissions does not represent what is known as the social cost of carbon. This value is the greater cost of carbon emissions to society and to the environment. As such, we believe it is important to continue to

invest in reducing the carbon emission of our activities through this carbon neutral operations strategy. Quantifying the current costs of the Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy versus the true social cost of carbon is an important metric for examining how much we should be investing in green technology and applications.

It is important for the County to consider ways to actively research local carbon offset activities. This includes how the County manages forests, open fields, vacant parcels, or even right-of-way. There may be substantial opportunity to consider ways to further offset carbon emissions and promote sequestration of carbon through land management practices.

The Carbon Neutral Government Operations Strategy is used as the framework for planning and decision making. All actions in Section V of this plan, the implementation roadmap, are categorized and presented in terms of this strategy. ■

**Table 1.** Carbon Offsets and Social Cost of Carbon 2017–2018

Reporting Year	Carbon Offsets Retired (MT CO2e)	RECs Retired (MWH)	Actual Cost of Offsets (% of annual utility budget)	Social Cost of Carbon (% of annual utility budget)	Social Cost of Carbon
2018	7,775	10,892	0.5%	14.4%	\$447,526
2017	7,338	11,914	0.4%	15.0%	\$412,094

**Notes:**

- Table includes offsets for 100% of Scope 1 and 2 emissions only.
- Social Cost of Carbon values taken from the EPA's Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866 (May 2013, Revised July 2016)

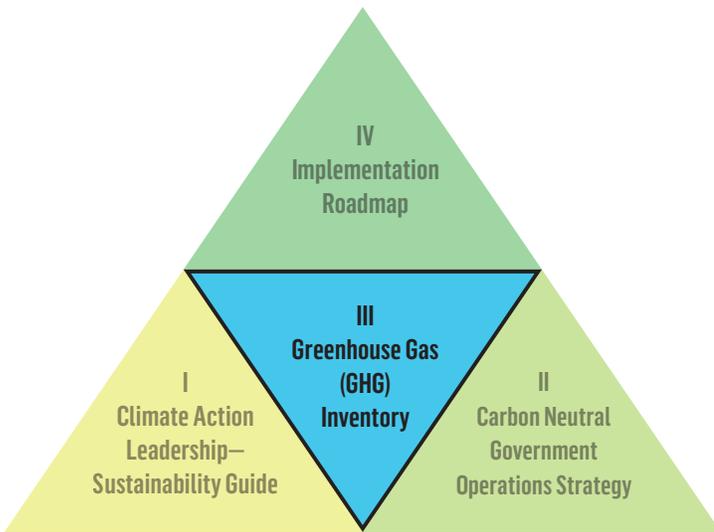


# Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory for Local Government Operations

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An accurate greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory is a critical component of a climate action plan. The inventory process sets a baseline year of GHG emissions using a scope and methodology that can be replicated in following years. This consistency in accounting allows the organization to measure and verify the effectiveness of GHG emissions reduction measures through time—with confidence that changes seen in emission levels are the result of government actions and are not due to changes in reporting methodology or organizational boundaries.





**F**or Ulster County, the annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory is a necessary tool for determining the quantity of offsets required each year to achieve net carbon neutral operations. These offsets are not counted as actual reductions in emissions or as progress toward GHG reduction goals. The GHG accounting in this inventory report assumes the absence of all offsets.

It is important to note that greenhouse gas inventories can differ substantially in

scope and methods. They vary because of differences in the type of organization that is undergoing an inventory (e.g. a small municipality versus a state), they can vary due to the type of data that is available for conducting the inventory, and they can vary due to the goals of the inventory. However, in order for the inventory to be used for long term comparison and evaluation, the analysis methods must be consistent across time.

Data collection processes play an important role in achieving this consistency. The Ulster County Department of the Environment has improved its data collection methods through the preparation of two annual reports: the Green Fleet Policy Report and the Building Benchmarking Report. Both of these reports are mandated by legislative policy and provide the energy use information for annual updates to the County’s GHG Inventory. The most recent versions of these reports can be viewed at the weblink provided in Appendix D.

**Table 2.** Distinction between GHG measures as applied toward reduction goals

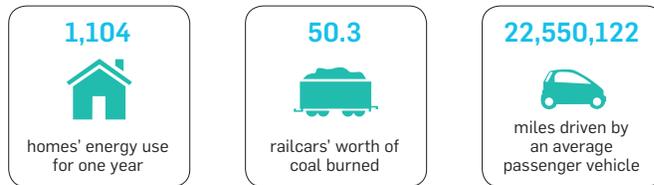
Mitigation Type	Measure
Actual Reduction (counts toward operational goals)	Onsite generation (behind the meter) Local* Remote Net Metering Local Community Distributed Generation (CDG)
Offset (counts toward carbon neutral government initiative only)	Renewable energy credits (RECS), national origin Carbon credits, national origin

\* Local is defined as generation physically within the same NY ISO load zone and utility territory as the utility meter being serviced by the load.

## Progress towards Goals

In 2018, Ulster County government operations emitted 9,238 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e.<sup>1</sup>

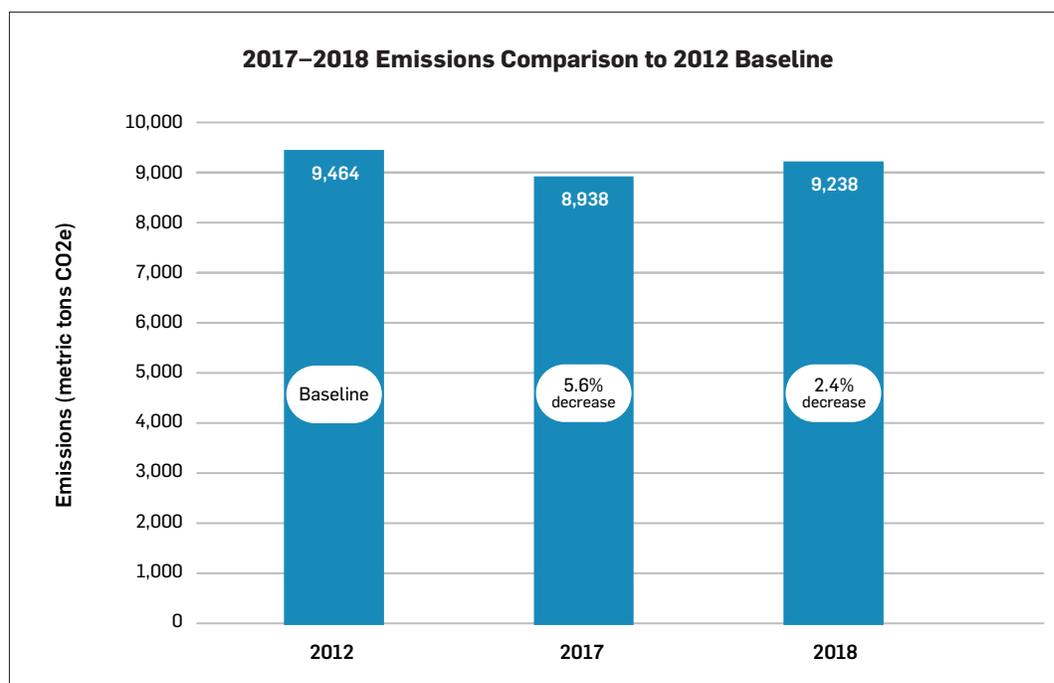
This is the equivalent to:



Between the baseline year of 2012 and the most recent GHG inventory for 2018, Ulster County's actual emissions from government operations decreased by 2.4%.

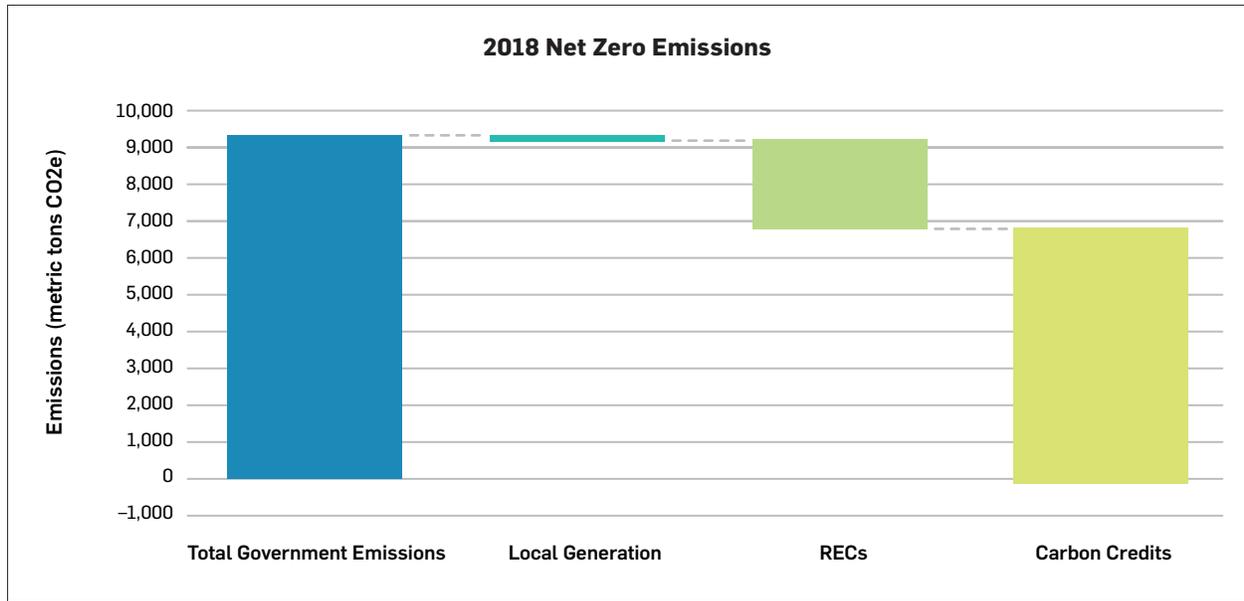
**Table 3.** 2017–2018 Net Government Operations Carbon Emissions (MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) compared to Baseline

Category	2012	2017	2018
Total Government Activity Emissions	9,464	8,938	9,360
Local Generation (RNEM, CDG)	0	0	-122
Actual Government Emissions	9,464	8,938	9,238
Voluntary RECs	0	-1,600	-1,463
Carbon Credits	0	-7,338	-7,775
<b>Net Government Operations Carbon Emissions</b>	<b>9,464</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



**Figure 5.**

<sup>1</sup> Calculator available here: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>



**Figure 6.** Activities yielding net zero emissions

The GHG emissions level each year is a function of numerous factors. Some factors are related to the quantity of services provided by the government and others are outside the control of the government, yet can impact the annual GHG emission levels significantly. The following external factors have contributed to the changes seen in emissions across sectors:

**Table 4.** External factors 2012 to 2018

Sector	Change in CO2e emissions 2012-2018	External Factors Influencing Sector Changes 2012-2018
Buildings and Other Facilities	-9.6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The electricity emissions factor decreased by 28%</li> <li>The combined number of heating degree days and cooling degree days increased by 16%</li> </ul>
Transit Fleet	-5.5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added routes</li> <li>Increase in number of gasoline vehicles in fleet</li> </ul>
Vehicle Fleet	+9.9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of winter storm events increased by 100%</li> <li>Flooding events increased by 50%</li> <li>Wind events increased by 140%</li> <li>Annual usage data dependent on fuel tank delivery schedules</li> </ul>
Water Delivery	+30.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual usage data dependent on fuel tank delivery schedules</li> </ul>
Streetlights and Traffic Signals	-20.9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The electricity emissions factor decreased by 28%</li> </ul>

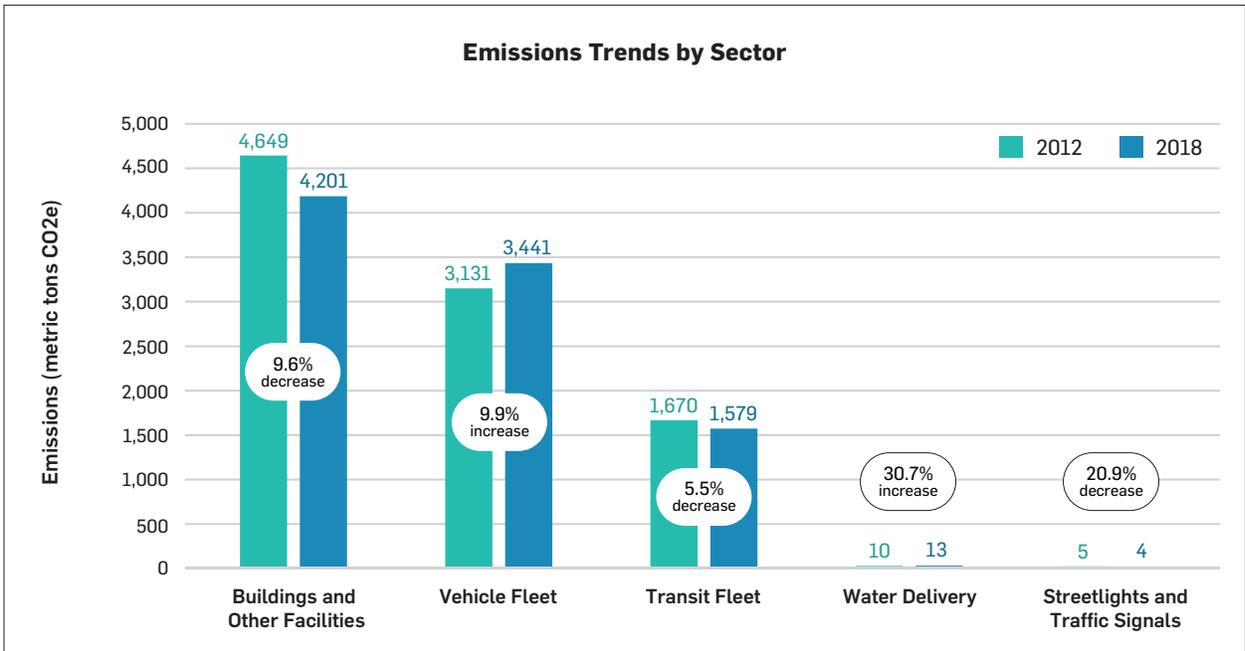


Figure 7.

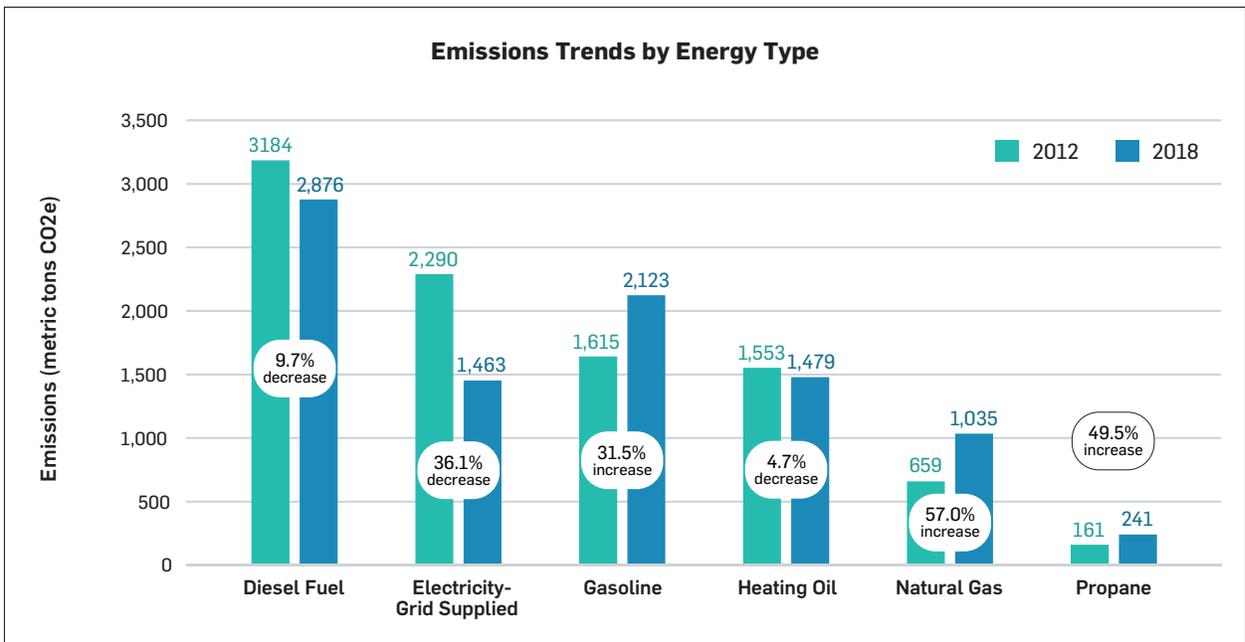


Figure 8.

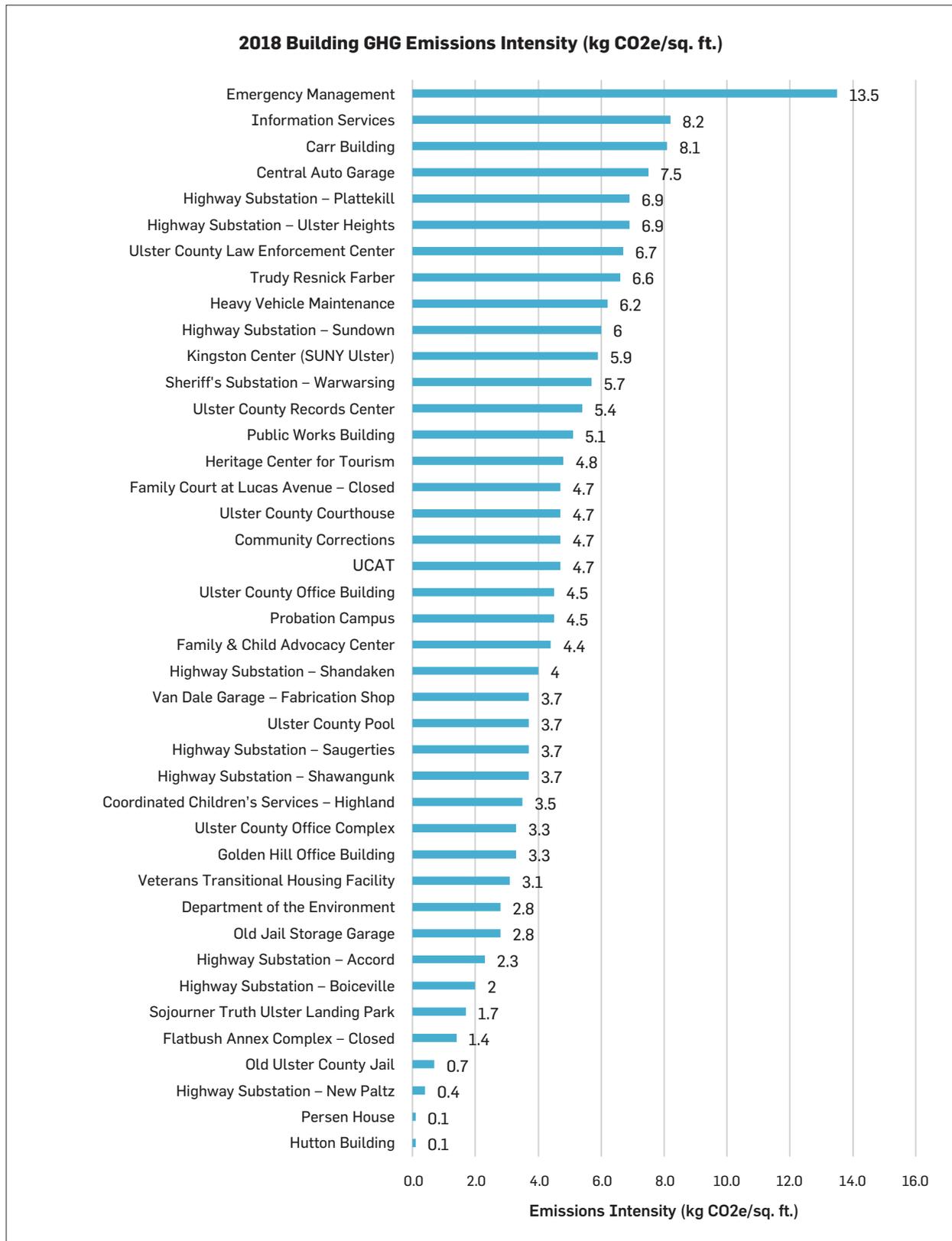


Figure 9.

# IV

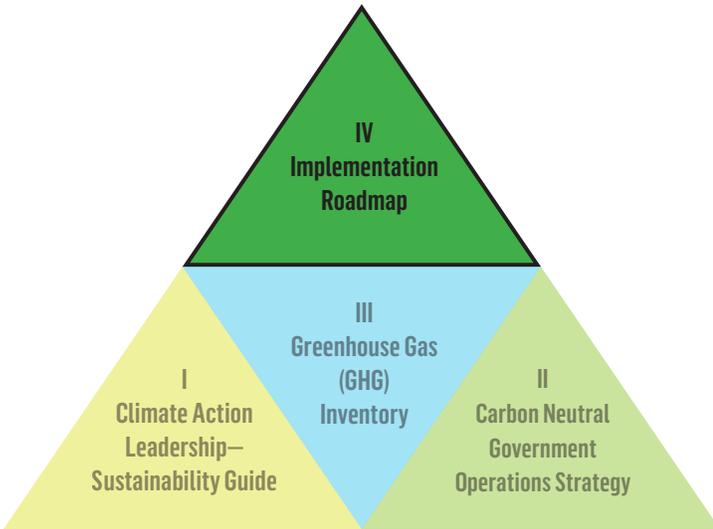


## Implementation Roadmap

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The final component of this Climate Action Plan for Government Operations is a comprehensive list of actions which could be taken to reduce GHG emissions due to our operations. This list was compiled after discussion with County staff and departments, reexamination of the 2010 comprehensive energy audits for Ulster County facilities, a review of current projects and initiatives, an examination of the Certification Manual for the NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities program as well as a review of other municipal climate action plans.





The roadmap is divided into the three primary sectors of activity identified in the GHG Inventory: buildings & other facilities, vehicle fleet, and the transit fleet. Two additional implementation areas were added to address actions that affect multiple GHG inventory reporting sectors. Consistent with the Ulster County Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy, the action items for each focus area are prioritized to ensure that efforts to reduce consumption are identified and implemented first.

## GHG Emissions Operational Goals

For each primary reporting sector, this plan sets targets for reduction based on the 2018 GHG inventory update (operating period 2019–2025). By achieving these near-term targets, the County will achieve its 25% reduction in GHG emission by 2025 goal. The table below shows the target for each sector as well as the overall emissions reduction targeted in each sector by 2025.

**Table 5.** Emissions Reduction Targets

	GHG Emissions (MT CO2e)	GHG Emissions % change from 2012 baseline
2012 baseline	9,464	—
2017	8,938	5.6% reduction
2018	9,238	2.4% reduction
2025 goal	7,098	25% reduction
2050 goal	1,893	80% reduction

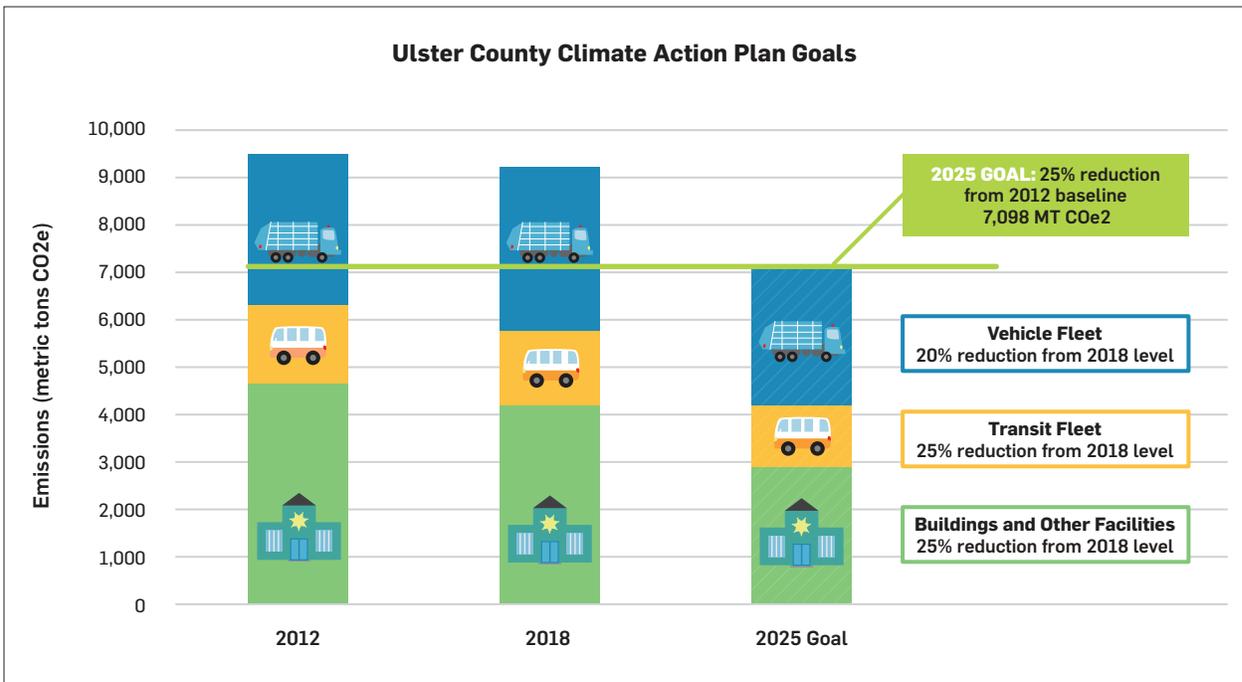


Figure 10. Climate Action Plan Goals by Sector

## Initiative timeframe

Each action is identified for completion by 2025 by assigning a timeframe based on these terms:

- Short: 1–2 years (2019–2020)
- Medium: 3–5 years (2021–2023)
- Long: 6–7 years (2024–2025)

## Cost Estimates

Each action item has been assigned a subjective cost estimate by Department of the Environment staff. The cost estimate incorporates monetary cost as well as County staff time and resources

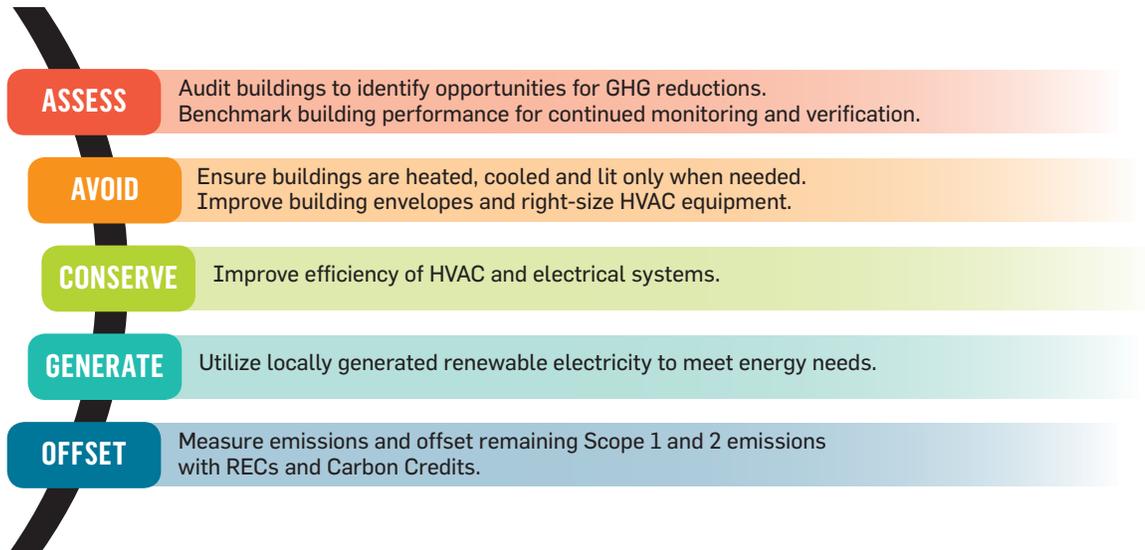
required to complete the action. These estimates may change as available grant and incentive programs evolve.

**Low:** Able to complete with existing budget or budget amendment. Able to be completed within normal staff operations.

**Medium:** May require use of capital funding. May require external personnel resources through contract.

**High:** Requires capital funding. Requires additional staff or contracted personnel.

## Focus Area #1: Buildings & Other Facilities



**Figure 11.** Buildings and Other Facilities GHG Reduction Strategy

**Focus Area Goal:** By 2025, reduce sector emissions by an additional **25%** (1,059.9 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) from 2017 levels. This reduction will yield an overall 16.4% reduction from the 2012 baseline.

The GHG emissions from the Buildings and Other Facilities sector has decreased by 9.6% since 2012. This reduction illustrates the effects of the the County's systematic program of implementing energy-use reduction measures since the County's 2010 building energy audit.

To achieve additional reductions, the County must convert all electricity use to locally generated sources and work to electrify remaining fossil fuel heating applications through HVAC equipment upgrades. This process is dependent on the remaining useful life of equipment and capital planning limitations.



**Table 6.** Buildings and Other Facilities Action Items

Action Number	Action	Strategic Priority	Impact	Cost	Timeframe
BF-1	Conduct additional building energy audits	Assess	Low	Medium	Medium
BF-2	Implement lighting controls in County owned buildings	Avoid	Medium	Medium	Medium
BF-3	Reduce and upgrade outdoor lighting	Avoid	Low	Low	Medium
BF-4	Update building automation systems & HVAC scheduling procedures	Avoid	Medium	Low	Short
BF-5	Assess feasibility of district heating system using County owned properties	Conserve	Low	High	Long
BF-6	Complete interior lighting upgrades for 100% of building area	Conserve	High	Medium	Short
BF-7	Green the lifecycle of office equipment	Conserve	Medium	Low	Short
BF-8	Install biomass heating systems at Highway Department Substations	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Medium
BF-9	Install geothermal heating and cooling system(s)	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Short
BF-10	Retrocommission low performing buildings	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Medium
BF-11	Upgrade HVAC equipment	Conserve	Medium	High	Medium
BF-12	Assess small wind turbine system(s) for County-owned properties	Generate	Low	Medium	Long
BF-13	Complete renewable energy feasibility studies	Generate	Low	Medium	Medium
BF-14	Conduct a rooftop solar assessment	Generate	Low	Low	Medium
BF-15	Evaluate brownfields for solar PV development through coordination with the EPA	Generate	Medium	Low	Medium
BF-16	Evaluate in-stream energy recovery system(s) for the Golden Hill water system	Generate	Low	Medium	Long
BF-17	Install additional solar PV system(s) using a third-party ownership model	Generate	High	Low	Medium
BF-18	Install battery storage technology on County property	Generate	Medium	Medium	Short
BF-19	Offset Scope 1 and 2 emissions from buildings and facilities	Offset	High	Low	Short

**ACTION BF-1****Conduct additional building energy audits**

An ASHRAE Level 3 energy audit of 27 buildings was completed in 2010. Many of the facility improvement measures identified by the audit have been implemented or planned through a series of HVAC/Weatherization capital projects, CP #s 394 through 402. These improvements are ongoing.

The County aims to conduct an updated comprehensive energy audit during the life of this plan. At a minimum, the County will complete an ASHRAE level 2 energy audit for greater than 75% of its buildings (by floor area.)

This audit will verify improvements since the 2010 audit and identify new energy conservation opportunities. The County will pursue cost-share funding through the NYSERDA FlexTech program to implement these audits."

**ACTION BF-2****Implement lighting controls in County owned buildings**

The County will audit its properties to identify opportunities in existing buildings to save electricity with the installation of lighting sensors and controls. These controls may include the following types: occupant sensing, time-switching, or daylight-responsive. Properties with building management systems will be audited and updated to ensure that lighting is used only when necessary. Lighting systems will be

updated to meet or exceed the International Energy Conservation Code section C405 when possible.

**ACTION BF-3****Reduce and upgrade outdoor lighting**

The County will develop and execute a strategy to reduce the number of outdoor lighting fixtures or reduce the time in which the fixtures are in use. The County will conduct a comprehensive inventory of all outdoor lighting that covers street and area lighting (including those owned by the local utility), traffic signals, and off-street light fixtures (in parking lots and public parks, for example). During this process, the County will upgrade all remaining outdoor lights to LED fixtures.

**ACTION BF-4****Update building automation systems & HVAC scheduling procedures**

The County will update and institute a procedure for the operation of existing building automation systems (BAS) and programmable thermostats. The County will audit existing systems to meet procedural standards for setbacks, zone occupancy periods and lighting. Any system errors or malfunctions will be corrected through operating improvements. The County will evaluate needs for additional BAS where needed. Training on BAS operation will be solicited and conducted. For buildings where a BAS is not needed, programmable thermostats with WIFI capability (where able) will be installed.

**ACTION BF-5****Assess feasibility of district heating system using County owned properties**

The County will consider campuses of properties where a district heating system may be feasible and will integrate a feasibility study into any capital planning for HVAC upgrades at the potential sites.

**ACTION BF-6****Complete interior lighting upgrades for 100% of building area**

As of 2019, Ulster County has completed LED retrofits at most County properties. However, a few major properties are remaining for retrofit: the UC Office Complex DSS portion and the SUNY Ulster Kingston Center campus. Through this action, the County will target 100% of building area for LED lighting.

**ACTION BF-7****Green the lifecycle of office equipment**

Ulster County will participate as a partner in the State Electronics Challenge, a program administered by the Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. focused on environmental stewardship of office equipment. The County will use the program as paradigm to implement policies and procedures for energy efficiency in office equipment. The Department of the Environment will work with Ulster County Information Services to complete an initial benchmarking report, followed by an annual report on the status of program requirements and activities.

**ACTION BF-8****Install biomass heating systems at Highway Division Substations**

The County will install a wood pellet heating system to replace propane heating in one or more properties in the Department of Public Works' network of highway substations. A feasibility study will be included in a larger scope energy and logistics assessment (of the highway substation network) to determine if a wood pellet heating installation is appropriate as an energy source for each property. This feasibility study will consider types of available technology, proximity to the wood pellet source, availability of bulk delivery services, costs, permitting and other restrictions, and other related factors to implementing the system. If the study concludes that a wood pellet installation is feasible, the County will select suitable sites for the installation along with a contractor to develop and implement the system.

**ACTION BF-9****Install geothermal heating and cooling system(s)**

The County is currently conducting feasibility studies as selected large County properties for ground source heat pump (GSHP) systems through the NYSERDA/New York Power Authority (NYPA) Geothermal Clean Energy Challenge program. The County will continue to assess feasibility at County properties both within and outside the program. The County will consider installing a GSHP system in the Carr Building at 1 Pearl Street. A GHSP system was included as "Other

Measures Considered" in the County's 2010 energy audit. The auditor suggested a vertical loop field with 4 new heat pump units to serve the heating and cooling loads of the building. This measure would replace the need to replace the condensing steam boiler and associated distribution system.

### **ACTION BF-10**

#### **Retrocommission low performing buildings**

Retrocommissioning is the process of assessing, analyzing and adjusting the operational parameters of systems in an existing building to optimize the system's performance and satisfy current operational needs. The County will hire a consultant to retrocommission buildings that have been identified as low performing through the benchmarking process. For the County, low performing buildings will be selected using the metric of emissions intensity. The County's process will conform with the retrocommissioning requirements put forth in the NYS BuildSmartNY guidelines developed by NYPA. Retrocommissioning activities will be funded by the green revolving fund and offset to the extent possible by available funding and incentives.

### **ACTION BF-11**

#### **Upgrade HVAC equipment**

The County will upgrade HVAC systems in government buildings to exceed the ASHRAE Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings,

90.1 by at least 3 percent and meet the NYStretch Energy Code-2020 standard, if applicable. New HVAC systems must also qualify for the EPA ENERGY STAR rating, if applicable. Upgrades will occur as deemed necessary by the UC Public Works Department based on recommendations from the Department of the Environment. Buildings with high emissions intensity will be targeted for upgrades. The Department of Public Works will develop and maintain an inventory of all HVAC equipment in County-owned buildings to determine and anticipate equipment replacement cycles.

### **ACTION BF-12**

#### **Assess small wind turbine system(s) for County-owned properties**

Based upon review of wind resource studies for New York State, the County has determined that large wind (>2 MW) systems are generally not economically feasible in Ulster County. However, in order to maximize the opportunities for distributed generation, the County will conduct an internal feasibility study for small-scale wind turbines at all County owned properties using the NYSERDA New York State Small windExplorer siting application. If warranted, the County will install a small wind turbine at one or more County facilities. The County will reference the NYSERDA Small Wind Turbine program to determine available incentives.

**ACTION BF-13****Complete renewable energy feasibility studies**

The County will complete at least three targeted renewable energy feasibility studies for technologies such as wind, solar, biomass, or geothermal. Depending on the scope and budget for the study, the County may elect to issue a request for proposals to hire an external consultant with expertise in analyzing and installing renewable energy systems. Completed and in progress energy master plan assessments will be used to inform further work determining feasibility of prospective projects.

**ACTION BF-14****Conduct a rooftop solar assessment**

The County will commission a study to assess the generation potential on rooftops of County owned buildings. The study will assess potential capacity, interconnection, roof condition, building energy needs, incentive structures, risks and cost. The study will make recommendations for prioritizing development of sites based on economic analysis.

**ACTION BF-15****Evaluate brownfields for solar PV development through coordination with the EPA**

The County Department of the Environment will work with the EPA's Solar Technical Assistance Team (STAT) to assist development of foreclosure eligible brownfield properties for solar PV production. In some cases, the County will procure a portion of

the locally generated power through the Community Distributed Generation program.

**ACTION BF-16****Evaluate in-stream energy recovery system(s) for the Golden Hill water system.**

The County will evaluate feasibility of installing in-stream hydroelectric generation systems in the Golden Hill water system. Such a system may offer the ability to recapture a portion of the pumping energy used in the system.

**ACTION BF-17****Install additional solar PV system(s) using a third-party ownership model**

The County will install solar PV technology at 5 new or existing public facilities or public properties using PPA or a land lease model. The agreement will be designed for Ulster County to be the partial or sole offtaker of the power.

**ACTION BF-18****Install battery storage technology on County property**

The County will assess ways to integrate future County-managed solar PV development into the electrical grid with a battery energy system that can provide grid services. Energy storage offers the ability to make the local electrical grid more efficient by controlling the intermittency of solar PV production, managing demand peaks and allowing for expanded renewable development capacity.

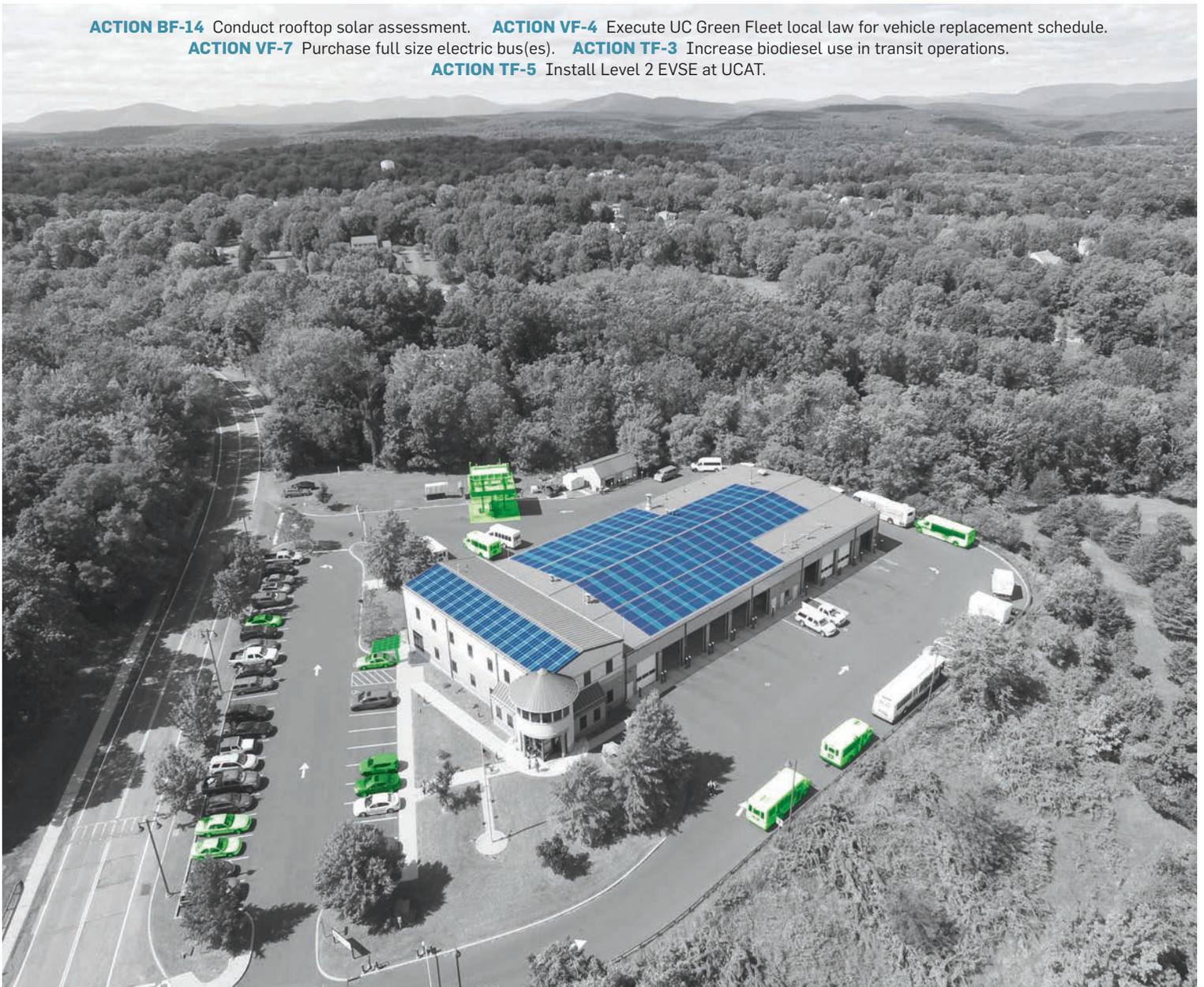
**ACTION BF-19****Offset Scope 1 and 2 emissions from buildings and facilities**

The County will purchase third-party certified carbon offsets to offset 100% of Scope 1 emissions from stationary combustion of fossil fuels in its buildings.

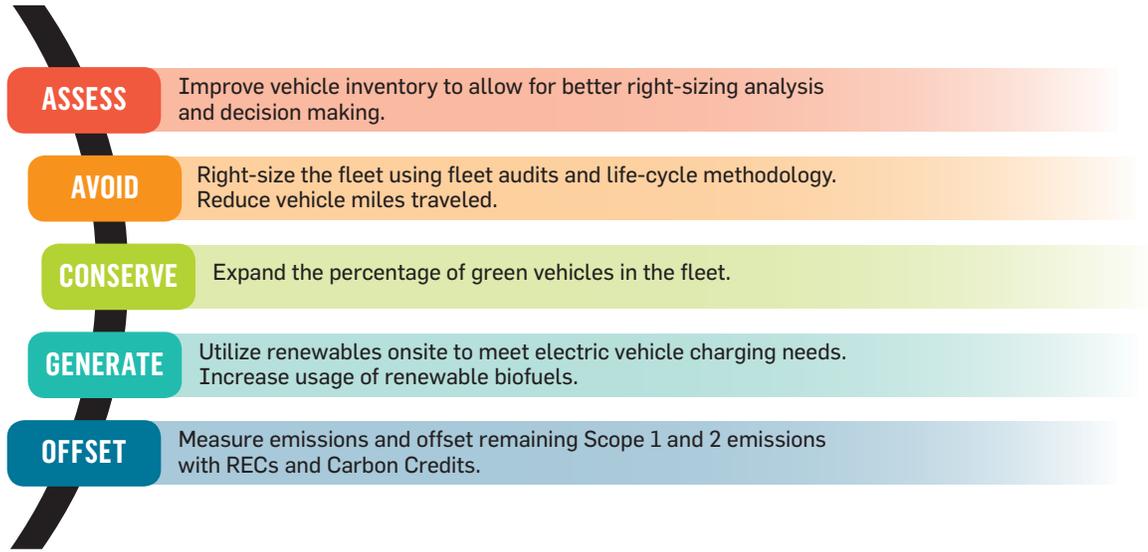
The County will also purchase Green-e certified renewable energy credits (RECs) on the voluntary market to offset 100% of

its Scope 2 emissions from buildings. This purchase may take the form of a green power product provided by an energy services company (ESCO). If feasible, the RECs will be Clean Energy Standard (CES) Tier 1 and retired in the New York State Generation Attribute Tracking System (NYGATS). RECs will be purchased for 100% of annual usage (in kWh) regardless of the actual percentage of nonrenewable fuels in the mixture of power sourced by the utility.

**ACTION BF-14** Conduct rooftop solar assessment. **ACTION VF-4** Execute UC Green Fleet local law for vehicle replacement schedule.  
**ACTION VF-7** Purchase full size electric bus(es). **ACTION TF-3** Increase biodiesel use in transit operations.  
**ACTION TF-5** Install Level 2 EVSE at UCAT.



## Focus Area #2: Vehicle Fleet



**Figure 12.** Vehicle Fleet GHG Reduction Strategy

**Focus Area Goal:** By 2025, reduce sector emissions by **20%** (670.9MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) from 2017 levels. This reduction will yield an overall 4.9% reduction from the 2012 baseline.

GHG emissions from the vehicle fleet can vary significantly from year to year due to changes to operational requirements, capital projects and extreme weather events. The Ulster County Green Fleet Law of 2015 sets green vehicle implementation goals and mandates annual tracking and reporting, but generally applies only to passenger vehicles. A large portion of the County’s vehicle fleet emissions come from medium and heavy duty vehicles which are currently difficult to replace with existing technology.

**Table 7.** Vehicle Fleet Action Items

Action Number	Action	Strategic Priority	Impact	Cost	Timeframe
VF-1	Quantify vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for Highway Division heavy duty vehicles	Assess	Low	Low	Short
VF-2	Implement a vehicle location tracking system	Avoid	Low	Medium	Medium
VF-3	Adopt biodiesel blend for Highway Department vehicles	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Medium
VF-4	Continue to execute UC Green Fleet Local law vehicle replacement schedule	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Short
VF-5	Install additional EV charging stations to support fleet operations	Conserve	Low	Medium	Short
VF-6	Purchase electric grounds maintenance equipment	Conserve	Low	Low	Medium
VF-7	Purchase electric passenger transit vans for Sheriff's department	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Medium
VF-8	Train UC fleet mechanics to maintain and repair electric vehicles	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Medium
VF-9	Deploy solar PV EVSE system(s)	Generate	Low	High	Long
VF-10	Offset Scope 1 and 2 emissions from vehicle fleet operations	Offset	High	Medium	Short

**ACTION VF-1****Quantify vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for Highway Division heavy duty vehicles**

The Department of Environment will work with the DPW Highways Division to analyze data from the FuelMaster vehicle management system, which is installed on most Division heavy-duty vehicles. This analysis will provide insights to the Fleet manager and Highways Division Garage Supervisor to make decisions about routing, personnel training, and vehicle life cycle. This capability has been installed recently, but not fully incorporated into the County's green fleet data collection.

**ACTION VF-2****Implement a vehicle location tracking system**

The County will install an Auto Vehicle Locator (AVL) system to track mileage and analyze routing patterns of County owned vehicles. Analysis of fleet vehicle activity by the County's Fleet Manager and Department of the Environment will be used to make recommendations for fleet vehicle operating procedures aimed at reducing fuel consumption.

**ACTION VF-3****Adopt biodiesel blend for Highway Division vehicles**

The County will adopt a biodiesel blend fuel for heavy duty vehicles in public works fleet. Initially a B5 blend will be introduced where feasible, with the goal to increase the percentage of biodiesel in the fuel up to 20% (B20).

**ACTION VF-4****Continue to execute UC Green Fleet Local law vehicle replacement schedule**

Local Law No. 9 of 2015 mandates that a minimum of 5% of the fleet by 2020 are green vehicles. Thereafter, annually, a minimum of 20% of passenger vehicles purchased, leased or otherwise obtained will be green vehicles.

**ACTION VF-5****Install additional EV charging stations to support fleet operations**

The County currently operates 17 Level 2 (240V) EV charging station on County-owned properties. The County will use grant and rebate funding to install additional stations and make them available to the fleet and the public. Installation locations will be determined based on fleet needs.

**ACTION VF-6****Purchase electric grounds maintenance equipment**

The County will evaluate and purchase electric lawn care equipment: mowers, leaf blowers, trimmers etc. The UC Department of the Environment will assist DPW Buildings and Grounds Division with the procurement process. The use of this equipment will reduce Scope 1 emissions from combustion of gasoline.

**ACTION VF-7****Purchase electric passenger transit vans for Sheriff's department**

The County will purchase one or more fully-electric vehicles to serve as inmate transport vehicles. These vehicles will utilize the existing Level 2 EVSE at the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center. If possible, the County will utilize funding from the NY Truck Voucher Incentive program when it becomes available.

**ACTION VF-8****Train UC fleet mechanics to maintain and repair electric vehicles**

The Department of the Environment will work with the County's Office of Education and Training to seek grant funding to develop a training program for vehicle fleet mechanics to prepare the County's workforce to operate and maintain electric vehicles and equipment. This action directly supports the expansion of green vehicles in the fleet by reducing maintenance costs.



### **ACTION VF-9**

#### **Deploy solar PV EVSE system(s)**

Standalone EV charging technology exists that would allow for off-grid electric vehicle charging, fueled solely by solar PV panels built into the charging station canopy.

Adoption of this technology would allow fully electric vehicles to operate in areas of the County where grid interconnection would be costly/difficult, where grid power is not available due to an outage, or where the operations are temporary. This

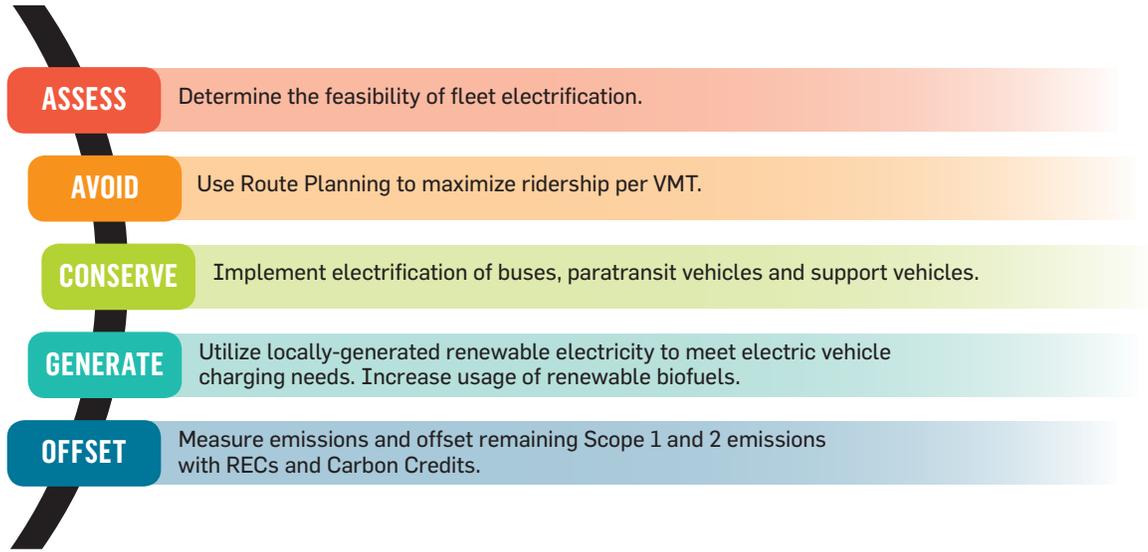
technology also offers a mobile power supply for emergency operations, to be utilized by the Ulster County Emergency Services or the Sheriff's Department.

### **ACTION VF-10**

#### **Offset Scope 1 and 2 emissions from vehicle fleet operations**

The County will continue to offset all mobile combustion and purchased electricity emissions from vehicle fleet operation.

## Focus Area #3: Transit Fleet



**Figure 13.** Transit Fleet GHG Reduction Strategy

**Focus Area Goal:** By 2025, reduce sector emissions by an additional **15%** (221.4 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e) from 2017 levels. This reduction will yield an overall 4.3% reduction from the 2012 baseline.

Electric technology exists for many transit vehicle applications today. Ulster County's approach to reduce emissions in the transit fleet sector is to purchase electric vehicles as their fossil fuel predecessors become due for replacement. Operational needs will be evaluated to ensure the technologies chosen are appropriate for the application and that sufficient charging infrastructure is in place.

**Table 8.** Transit Fleet Action Items

Action Number	Action	Strategic Priority	Impact	Cost	Timeframe
TF-1	Complete a Transit Fleet Electrification Study	Assess	Low	Medium	Short
TF-2	Modify transit routes and schedules to maximize passenger miles per unit GHG emissions	Avoid	Medium	Medium	Medium
TF-3	Increase biodiesel use in transit operations	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Medium
TF-4	Install DC fast charging equipment at UCAT facilities for bus charging	Conserve	High	Medium	Short
TF-5	Install Level 2 EVSE at UCAT	Conserve	Low	Low	Short
TF-6	Purchase electric paratransit vehicle(s)	Conserve	Medium	High	Long
TF-7	Purchase full size electric bus(es)	Conserve	High	High	Medium
TF-8	Purchase green vehicle(s) for UCAT support/administrative fleet	Conserve	Low	Medium	Short
TF-9	Train UCAT mechanics to maintain and repair electric buses	Conserve	Medium	Medium	Short
TF-10	Offset Scope 1 and 2 emissions from transit operations	Offset	High	Medium	Short

**ACTION TF-1****Complete a Transit Fleet Electrification Study**

Ulster County has been awarded grant funding for a transit fleet electrification study. The County will contract with a vendor to conduct a technical feasibility assessment and a roadmap to support the deployment of electric transit vehicles in the UCAT fleet over an estimated 12 year replacement cycle. This roadmap would be designed to be a transferrable framework for transit fleets in the region to conduct a similar study. This study will include consideration and evaluation of EV bus charging infrastructure required.

**ACTION TF-2****Modify transit routes and schedules to maximize passenger miles per unit GHG emissions**

As part of its ongoing transportation planning initiatives, the County will analyze ways to decrease the VMT and emissions associated with the transit fleet operation while maximizing the number of passenger miles and increasing ridership. These improvements will ensure that the greatest number of County residents and visitors have access to high-efficiency transportation alternatives, reducing both transit fleet emissions and emissions from the regional community transportation sector.

**ACTION TF-3****Increase biodiesel use in transit operations**

Ulster County will source and use B20 biodiesel fuel for transit fleet, when operationally feasible. Currently, the transit fleet uses B5 biodiesel approximately 50% of the year. Increasing the biodiesel percentage in the fuel would reduce conventional diesel usage by approximately 9,500 gallons/year, saving 100 metric tons of carbon emissions. These emissions would be considered biogenic in origin and would not add to our Scope 1 emissions inventory.

**ACTION TF-4****Install DC fast charging equipment at UCAT facilities for bus charging**

The County will partner with NYPA to install at least 3 depot-style DC fast charge bus chargers rated at 150KW or greater at the UCAT bus garage. The County will utilize cost share funding provided through the Volkswagen settlement, a program managed by the NYS DEC.

**ACTION TF-5****Install Level 2 EVSE at UCAT**

The County will install multiple Level 2 EVSE stations at the UCAT headquarters and bus garage to service fleet support vehicles and demand service vans. The number of plugs will be determined based on operational scheduling and power needs.

**ACTION VF-7** Purchase full size electric bus(es).



**ACTION TF-6**  
**Purchase electric paratransit vehicle(s)**

The County will identify and adopt technology to electrify the paratransit fleet. Existing paratransit vehicles are 14-22 seat cutaway buses with lift capability that are powered by diesel or gasoline. The County's transit fleet electrification study will inform choices for adoption.

**ACTION TF-7**  
**Purchase full size electric bus(es)**

The County will integrate 35' and 40' electric buses into its existing fleet. UCAT will seek federal and state funding, including VW settlement funding to offset the incremental cost above that of a typical diesel powered vehicle. This cost is expected to be approximately \$250,000. UCAT will also install depot style DC fast-charging infrastructure in its bus depot to support the integration of electric buses.

**ACTION TF-8**  
**Purchase green vehicles for UCAT support/administrative fleet**

Purchase one or more green vehicle for administrative and support use at UCAT. Vehicle shall be a plug-in hybrid or all electric vehicle. This vehicle will replace an existing conventional fuel service vehicle and will utilize a Level 2 charging station installed on site at UCAT.

**ACTION TF-9**  
**Train UCAT mechanics to maintain and repair electric buses**

The Department of the Environment will work with the County's Office of Education and Training to seek grant funding to develop a training program for UCAT bus mechanics to prepare the County's workforce to operate and maintain electric buses.

**ACTION TF-10**  
**Offset Scope 1 and 2 emissions from transit operations**

The County will continue to purchase carbon credits to offset Scope 1 mobile combustion emissions from transit operations. When the fleet begins to electrify, the County will purchase RECs to offset emissions from Scope 2 purchased electricity.

## Focus Area #4: Policy & Procedure



**Figure 14.** Policy & Procedure GHG Reduction Strategy

GHG emissions from County operations can be impacted by County employee decision-making processes and behaviors. These emission sources can cross boundaries between reporting sectors and are often dependent on structural choices made early in the planning process. Through the implementation of climate-conscious policies and procedures, the County can achieve long-term reductions of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions across all reporting sectors.

### **ACTION PP-1**

#### **Develop materials management annual plan and report**

The County will develop a tracking and reporting mechanism for solid waste, recycling and diversion across all government operations activities. This information will be summarized in an annual report that is developed by the County's Department of Public Works and reviewed by the Department of the Environment prior to release. Each annual report will update the solid waste management plan with new initiatives for the subsequent reporting year.

### **ACTION PP-2**

#### **Develop methodology for reporting emissions from contracted services**

The County will develop a list of vital government services that are currently contracted with outside vendors to provide a better picture of emissions attributed to government operations. The intent will be to identify long term contracts and estimate emissions based on the quantity of services provided.

**Table 9.** Policy & Procedure Action Items

Action Number	Action	Strategic Priority	Impact	Cost	Timeframe
PP-1	Develop materials management annual plan and report	Assess	Low	Low	Short
PP-2	Develop methodology for reporting emissions from contracted services	Assess	Low	Low	Short
PP-3	Implement Social Cost of Carbon into capital planning and government operations decisions	Assess	Low	Low	Short
PP-4	Improve vehicle inventory	Assess	Low	Low	Short
PP-5	Seek grant funding for climate change mitigation projects	Assess	Low	Low	Short
PP-6	Track building energy efficiency upgrades	Assess	Low	Low	Short
PP-7	Track water usage for government buildings	Assess	Low	Low	Long
PP-8	Adopt a green building standard for existing buildings	Avoid	Medium	Low	Short
PP-9	Conduct life-cycle analysis for all new vehicle purchases	Avoid	Low	Medium	Medium
PP-10	Develop an organic waste program for government buildings	Avoid	Low	Low	Short
PP-11	Education and outreach for employee energy conservation	Avoid	Medium	Low	Short
PP-12	Encourage green business travel	Avoid	Low	Low	Medium
PP-13	Encourage UC Employee commuting on UCAT	Avoid	Low	Low	Medium
PP-14	Improve refrigerant management procedures	Avoid	High	Medium	Medium
PP-15	Integrate sustainability review procedures into the capital planning process	Avoid	Medium	Low	Short
PP-16	Right-size the local government fleet	Avoid	High	Low	Short
PP-17	Update the County's environmentally preferable purchasing policy	Avoid	Medium	Medium	Short
PP-18	Use vehicle tracking systems to monitor the anti-idling policy for County Highway vehicles	Avoid	Low	Low	Short
PP-19	Adopt a green financing mechanism	Conserve	Medium	Low	Short
PP-20	Develop a government ops waste reduction strategy	Conserve	Low	Low	Medium
PP-21	Incorporate waste & energy provisions in government contracts	Conserve	Low	Low	Medium
PP-22	Join EPA WasteWise program	Conserve	Low	Low	Long
PP-23	Adopt a PV-Ready construction standard	Generate	Medium	Low	Short
PP-24	Establish internal procedures to evaluate foreclosure eligible properties for clean energy siting potential	Generate	Medium	Low	Medium
PP-25	Conduct carbon sequestration planning for County Owned properties	Offset	Medium	High	Long

**ACTION PP-3****Implement Social Cost of Carbon into capital planning and government operations decisions**

The County will use federal and state estimates for the true cost of GHG emissions (Social Cost of Carbon, SC-CO<sub>2</sub>) as a metric for evaluating economic decisions related to Climate Action Plan projects. The Department of the Environment will quantify and compare the actual cost of voluntary carbon offsets to the SC-CO<sub>2</sub> in annual GHG inventory reporting. This action will become part of the capital sustainability review checklist.

**ACTION PP-4****Improve vehicle inventory**

The County will track additional categories in its vehicle inventory to meet the standards of the Climate Smart Communities program. At minimum, the fleet inventory must include the following 11 categories for every four-wheeled vehicle owned or operated by the local government:

- Model year
- Year purchased
- Make
- Model
- Drivetrain type (2-wheel, 4-wheel, or all-wheel drive)
- Type of fuel/power source (e.g., gasoline, diesel, compressed natural gas, electricity)
- Miles per gallon (MPG) rating
- Mileage (i.e., the odometer reading)
- Class: light-duty, medium-duty, or heavy-duty
- Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) over 8,500 pounds: yes or no (This is a threshold often used for determining whether a vehicle qualifies as a heavy-duty vehicle and might therefore be deemed exempt from a municipal fleet efficiency policy.)
- Vehicle function (i.e., the tasks associated with the vehicle's use)

**ACTION PP-5****Seek grant funding for climate change mitigation projects**

The County's Department of the Environment will identify and pursue grant opportunities to further develop Ulster County Climate Action Plan projects in all phases.

**ACTION PP-6****Track building energy efficiency upgrades**

Ulster County tracks and will continue to track energy efficiency upgrades. These include routine replacements of lighting and HVAC equipment, as well as the implementation of energy conservation measures (ECMs) that have been identified through energy audits. Keeping track of improvements allows the county to apply for utility rebate programs and to quantify energy cost savings for financing future projects through its green revolving fund. Energy savings estimates allow the County to perform measurement & verification to ensure that expenditures are achieving the desired effect with regard to energy savings.



Energy efficiency projects are tracked using the Green Revolving Investment Tracking System (GRITS), a product of the Sustainable Endowments Institute (<http://www.endowmentinstitute.org/>).

### **ACTION PP-7**

#### **Track water usage for government buildings**

The County will incorporate water tracking into EPA Portfolio Manager for buildings that are metered from the City of Kingston water supply. Other properties with metered water supplies will be added to the database as able.

### **ACTION PP-8**

#### **Adopt a green building standard for existing buildings**

Resolution 383 of 2006 established green building standards for new County construction projects. This action would create a green building standard for existing buildings and a checklist for upgrades, and process for review, potentially creating a path to certification. The County will endeavor to adopt a policy that requires one or more of the following:

- Proactively upgrade existing buildings to a specific set of green building standards by a certain date
- Incorporation of green building standards when facilities are to be upgraded
- Apply green building standards to existing operation and maintenance programs

The County may reference existing green building design guidelines such as LEED for Existing Buildings or LEED Operations and Maintenance standards or, it may establish its own standards. If referencing an existing standard, it is not necessary to require buildings to be certified under the referenced program, as costs for certification can be prohibitive. Policies can instead require that buildings be certifiable under the guidelines. It is recommended that the adopted standards or policy specify the size and age of buildings to which the standards would be applicable.

#### **ACTION PP-9**

##### **Conduct life-cycle analysis for all new vehicle purchases**

The County Fleet Manager in coordination with the Department of the Environment will develop methodology and a procedure for calculating life cycle cost of new vehicles and document within the vehicle inventory. The life cycle analysis will inform vehicle replacement decisions, improving the overall efficiency of fleet operations.

#### **ACTION PP-10**

##### **Develop an organic waste program for government buildings**

The County will develop a program to provide organic waste collection and composting infrastructure in local government buildings for employees and visitors. If feasible, the County will contract with a third-party vendor to conduct regular

pickup and hauling services. The contract will require that the mass of organic waste diverted be quantified and reported to the UC Department of the Environment.

#### **ACTION PP-11**

##### **Education and outreach for employee energy conservation**

The County's Department of the Environment will continue efforts to promote awareness of energy and resource efficiency practices among Ulster County employees, to include updating the "Energy Smart Office Procedures" page on the County intranet. The County will update and continue to disseminate the UC Government Energy Policy & Implementation Guidebook.

#### **ACTION PP-12**

##### **Encourage green business travel**

The County will develop an operating procedure to encourage green business engagements that minimize the need to travel, both internally and externally. The policy will include a decision matrix to assist managers who are evaluating travel requests to ensure that the individual is considering the ability to conduct the required business via teleconferencing or video conferencing. For internal County business, telepresence through existing IS systems will be encouraged and promoted. If possible, incentives will be developed to further encourage remote meetings.

**ACTION PP-13****Encourage UC Employee commuting on UCAT**

The Department of the Environment will promote the use of public transit by UC employees for commuting to work. To the extent possible, the County will use employee ride data from UCAT to inform estimates of GHG emissions from employee commuting.

**ACTION PP-14****Improve refrigerant management procedures**

The County will review and improve its refrigerant management procedures for HVAC systems at County-owned properties in accordance with Section 608 of the EPA's Clean Air Act. The procedure will mandate a periodic inventory of existing refrigerants, to include refrigerant type and mass of charge in equipment. Additionally, the procedure will require documentation of leaks, recharges, equipment replacement and reclaim of materials in order to calculate an annual leak rate. The procedures will recommend leak testing and repair for HVAC equipment when warranted. The procedure will set guidance for acquisition of new equipment containing alternative refrigerants (low-GWP or non-HFC) with reference to the EPA's Significant New Alternative Policy (SNAP) program. The County does not currently inventory emissions from refrigerants in its GHG inventory, but this action will make it possible to quantify Scope 1 refrigerant emissions and adjust the baseline accordingly.

**ACTION PP-15****Integrate sustainability review procedures into the capital planning process**

The County Department of the Environment, with the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Works, will develop a review process to ensure Capital project development, design and procurement processes integrate sustainability, energy efficiency standards and best practices. Applicable standards will be the NYS Energy Conservation Code, LEED, Energy Star, the NYStretch Energy Code - 2020 and Central Hudson energy efficiency programs, or others as defined by the Department of the Environment. The review process will take the form of a checklist that must be approved by the Department of the Environment before a project can proceed. The Department of the Environment may elect to require an approval at each phase of the project, to ensure vendors are complying with stated standards and requirements. Where applicable, a life cycle cost-benefit analysis will be conducted (throughout the design phase) to ensure that increased energy savings are captured wherever possible. If needed, in coordination with the UC Purchasing Department, the County's green revolving fund will be used to fund the incremental cost increase for a sustainable and/or energy efficient design over the best cost design.

**ACTION PP-16****Right-size the local government fleet**

The County Department of the Environment will work with the Fleet Manager to implement the fleet rightsizing initiative contained in the Climate Smart Communities program. This will consist of the following strategies: 1) Fleet analysis, 2) Optimization of Fleet assignments, 3) Reduction of Fleet size

**ACTION PP-17****Update the County's environmentally preferable purchasing policy**

Ulster County developed and implemented an environmentally preferable "green" procurement policy in 2011. This policy will be updated to meet the standards and consideration areas of CSC PE3 Action: Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy. The Department of the Environment will conduct an audit to ensure that this policy is being used in practice. The Department of the Environment will also conduct training with purchasing department personnel. To the extent possible, the County will mirror NY State Office of General Services (OGS) Green NY purchasing policies and utilize OGS specifications.

**ACTION PP-18****Use vehicle tracking systems to monitor the anti-idling policy for County Highway vehicles**

The Green Fleet Policy sets an anti-idling requirement for all County vehicles. Technology exists to enforce this

requirement as well as to monitor idling time. The County's Department of the Environment will monitor the FuelMaster vehicle tracking system to make recommendations to the County's Department of Public Works for minimizing idle time in Highway Department vehicles.

**ACTION PP-19****Adopt a green financing mechanism**

The County will establish a financing mechanism for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in government owned buildings. The fund will operate in the model of a green revolving fund which is wholly-funded by a fixed percentage of documented energy savings from completed energy efficiency projects. This fund will be used to fund new energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, or the incremental cost increase thereof, as well as the purchase of offsets and other climate action initiatives.

**ACTION PP-20****Develop a government ops waste reduction strategy**

Through the development of a materials management plan, the County will develop a strategy for reducing waste for government operations. This plan will also include a waste management procedure for government hosted events.

**ACTION PP-21****Incorporate waste & energy provisions in government contracts**

The Department of the Environment will work with the County Attorney's office to update the County's contract boilerplate language to meet the requirements of the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) PE3 Action: Waste & Energy Provisions in Government Contracts

**ACTION PP-22****Join EPA WasteWise program**

The County, led by the County's Department of the Environment and in coordination with the Department of Public Works, will conduct the prerequisite evaluations and complete the actions needed to qualify as an active participant in the EPA's WasteWise program.

**ACTION PP-23****Adopt a PV-Ready construction standard**

The County will develop a standard to make new construction buildings "PV-ready." This policy will become part of the capital planning sustainability checklist.

**ACTION PP-24****Establish internal procedures to evaluate foreclosure eligible properties for clean energy siting potential**

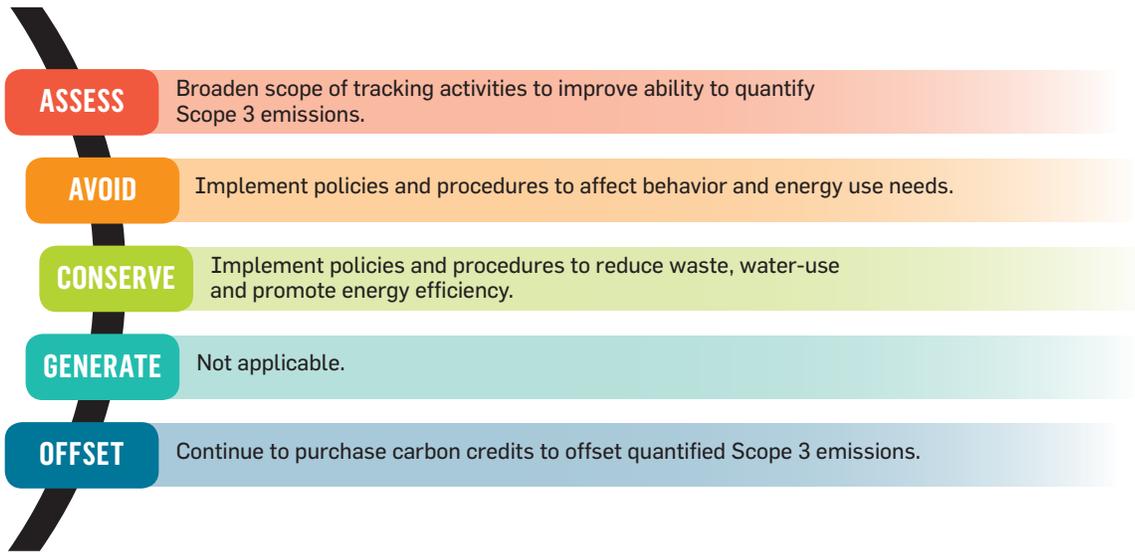
The Department of the Environment will lead an effort to develop procedures in County government for evaluating foreclosure

eligible properties for distributed generation development. The County is well positioned to redevelop many sites on the foreclosure list that are undesirable to other potential owners due to brownfield status. The County will use working relationships with the EPA Solar Technical Assistance Team (STAT) and the DEC to assist with site assessment and release from liens, if applicable. The end goal will be a process to annually evaluate properties for environmental potential and benefits (i.e. open space, clean energy generation, etc.)

**ACTION PP-25****Conduct carbon sequestration planning for County Owned properties**

The County will assess existing County-owned properties (large tracts of land) for potential carbon sequestration projects using DEC (or other) guidance to maximize carbon sequestration. This activity may require work with a licensed forester and coordination with the County Soil and Water and other stakeholders. The study will quantify the terms required for additionality and the GHG impact potential under several cost scenarios (to be determined) with reference to the Social Cost of Carbon.

## Focus Area #5: Scope 3 Emissions



**Figure 15.** Scope 3 GHG Reduction Strategy

**Scope 3 emissions** are indirect emissions that are not covered in Scope 2. Per the Local Government Operations Protocol, reporting of Scope 3 emissions is considered optional, but encouraged to the extent possible. During the execution of this plan, the County intends to continuously improve data collection, tracking and reporting capabilities to extend the reach of the Scope 3 emission sources that the County government can quantify and mitigate.

To date, only Scope 3 emissions attributed to employee commutes have been estimated and reported. As a result, it is expected that the quantity of emissions reported in future GHG inventories will increase. Actions in this Focus area will target these Scope 3 sources:

- Employee Commute
- Employee business travel
- Emissions from contracted services
- Waste related emissions
- Supply chain emissions

**Table 10.** Scope 3 Action Items

Action Number	Action	Strategic Priority	Impact	Cost	Timeframe
S3-1	Conduct a government solid waste audit	Assess	Low	Medium	Medium
S3-2	Conduct employee commuting survey	Assess	Low	Low	Short
S3-3	Quantify business travel emissions	Assess	Low	Medium	Medium
S3-4	Improve bicycle infrastructure at County properties	Avoid	Low	Low	Medium
S3-5	Provide incentives for employee carpooling & transit	Avoid	Low	Low	Long
S3-6	Host employee ride & drive event	Conserve	Low	Low	Short
S3-7	Install water efficient fixtures	Conserve	Low	Medium	Long
S3-8	Offset emissions from employee commutes	Offset	High	Medium	Short

**ACTION S3-1**

**Conduct a government solid waste audit**

Assessing the amount and composition of the waste generated by local government operations is an essential step in establishing a baseline from which to measure waste diversion and reduction improvements over time. This baseline will inform decisions about waste management and will aid in quantifying potential cost and emissions savings. The waste audit plan will be developed by the Department of the Environment and will be executed by DPW staff. The Department of the Environment will synthesize and analyze the results, determining a baseline Scope 3 emissions estimate. Where possible, building waste streams will be tracked using the EPA Portfolio Manager application.

**ACTION S3-2**

**Conduct employee commuting survey**

The County will issue an annual employee commuting survey based on the template developed by the Hudson Valley Regional Council in the Climate Action Planning Institute Program. This survey will inform the assumptions of Scope 3 employee commute emissions estimates. The survey will be issued in an online format and in paper format when able. The Department of Environment will collect and analyze the data annually.

**ACTION S3-3**

**Quantify business travel emissions**

The County will collect travel reimbursement forms from the Finance Department to make an analysis of Scope 3 emissions from business travel to include airline

travel, rental cars and personal vehicle miles. This information will be included in an updated Scope 3 emissions baseline.

#### **ACTION S3-4**

##### **Improve bicycle infrastructure at County properties**

The County will install bicycle racks at all County properties. Bicycle racks will be sheltered when possible and located in a well lit location, positioned to ensure that building access is of comparable ease to that of vehicle drivers. Buildings with fewer than 10 employees, or in remote locations could be excepted.

#### **ACTION S3-5**

##### **Provide incentives for employee carpooling & transit**

The County will encourage resource-efficient behavior among their employees by developing programs to incentivize the use of alternative forms of transportation.

#### **ACTION S3-6**

##### **Host employee ride & drive event**

The Department of Environment and the DPW Fleet Manager will host Ride and Drive events for employees of departments that have EV fleet vehicles and EV charging stations. The aim of the program will be to get UC employees engaged with electric vehicle technology and become well-versed in how to operate and charge electric vehicles. The Department of the Environment will track the number of employees engaged in these events.

#### **ACTION S3-7**

##### **Install water efficient fixtures**

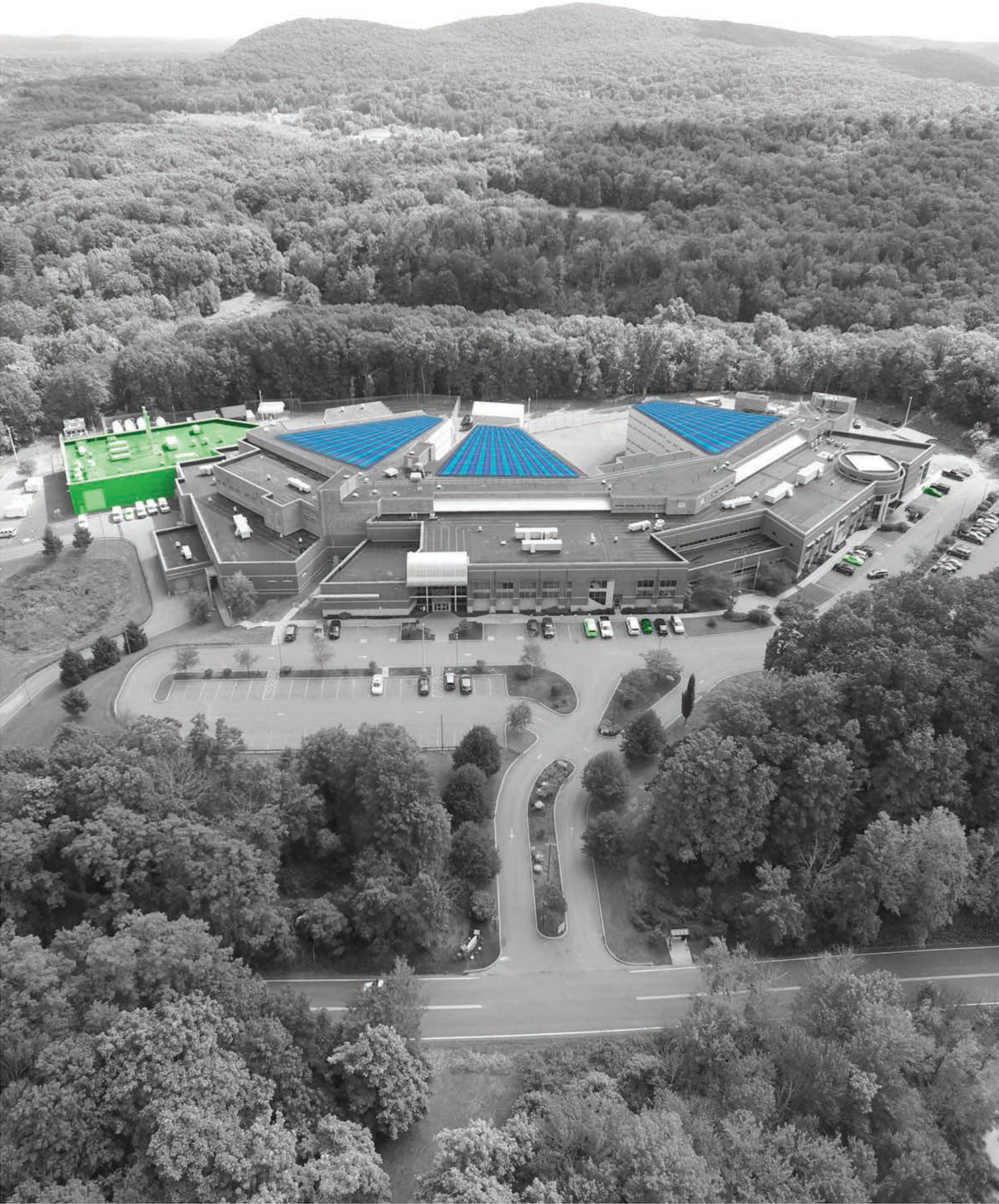
Water-efficient fixtures should be installed in County buildings to save money and reduce energy use. For new construction and renovation projects, water-efficient fixtures should be installed in bathrooms, kitchens, and any other relevant areas throughout local government buildings. Water-efficient fixtures may include low-flow or dual-flush toilets, faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, or waterless urinals. This action item will be included in a sustainability checklist that will be reviewed for all new capital projects. The County will endeavor to create an inventory of water fixture types by building and identify areas for improvement.

#### **ACTION S3-8**

##### **Offset emissions from employee commutes**

The County will continue to purchase carbon credits to offset emissions from employee commuting. Through surveys and best practice methods, the County will improve its estimates of employee commuting Scope 3 emissions.

**ACTION BF-10** Retrocommission low performing buildings. **ACTION BF-18** Install battery storage technology on County property.  
**ACTION TF-5** Install Level 2 EVSE.



# Implementation Plan

## Metrics

Climate action plan progress will be measured using GHG emissions intensity metrics. GHG emissions intensity is calculated as GHG emissions per unit of service provided. These metrics will be reported in the annual GHG Inventory Report and other associated Ulster County annual reports (Benchmarking, Green Fleet.)

Through implementation of this Climate Action Plan, Ulster County will improve data collection methods to accurately quantify these metrics.

For each sector, these measures and metrics are listed below:

**Table 11.** Climate Action Plan metrics

Sector	Service measure unit	GHG Emissions Intensity Metric unit	Notes & Exceptions
Buildings and Other Facilities	Square feet (ft2)	Kg CO2e/square foot/year	Certain facilities are not included in the aggregate metric—such as communications towers and EV charging stations. Excepted facilities will be listed in reporting.
Streetlights and Traffic Signals	Number of light fixtures	Kg CO2e/fixture/year	
Transit Fleet	Vehicle Miles traveled (VMT)	Kg CO2e/mile	VMT includes service vehicles
Vehicle Fleet	VMT	Kg CO2e/mile	VMT does not include certain highway and grounds maintenance equipment.
Water Delivery Facilities	Gallons delivered	Kg CO2e/gal	Golden Hill water system only

## Cost & Funding

All energy improvements are analyzed on period of return or the length of time which any increased cost associated with an improvement would be offset by the decreased energy costs. Wherever possible, grants and utility sponsored programs have been used to reduce the costs associated with energy efficiency improvements. To date, the County has focused on short term paybacks, less than five years, and has found many opportunities. There have been minimal costs associated with right-sizing and energy reduction.

The incremental cost of buying Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) was mandated by the County Executive to be budget neutral. Since initiating REC and carbon offset purchases, the County has been able to identify and use utility incentives to implement LED retrofits with short payback periods resulting in savings equal to the cost of offsets. With the creation of a Green Revolving Fund (GRF) in 2019, we anticipate that this relationship will be formalized by paying the cost of offsets from the GRF.

To date, the Department of the Environment has helped to secure over \$2.2 million in outside implementation funding directly related to energy efficiency and GHG emissions reduction. This includes funding

from: the US Department of Energy, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYSERDA and Central Hudson. Additionally, many of these initiatives (such as the PV solar installation at New Paltz and extensive interior and exterior LED lighting retrofits) result in substantially lower energy consumption and energy bills for the County. As stated previously in this report, LED lighting retrofits alone are estimated to save over 2 million kilowatt-hours and \$225,000 each year. We are confident that this plan will allow us to continue to leverage outside funding and identify projects with the best return on investment for the County.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Executive Order 1-2019 clearly states the goal of reducing GHG emissions associated with operations (through conservation, efficiency and on-site renewable generation) by 25% in 2025 and 80% in 2050. This plan identifies a series of actions, primarily focused on buildings and fleet which when implemented should result in meeting the 2025 goals. Since all emissions are tracked annually through the Building Benchmarking Report and the Green Fleet Report, there will be consistent monitoring and reporting towards this goal. ■

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# Next Steps: Amplifying and Expanding County Climate Action

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The Ulster County Government Operations Climate Action Plan is focused on reducing the GHG emissions associated with county government operations. Although Ulster County Government manages a sizeable operation, it is a relatively small percentage of the overall County emissions. In addition, the plan is focused strictly on emissions reduction and does not include other activities which support the resilience of the County's operations and infrastructure to the effects of climate change. To create the community-wide emissions reduction necessary as well as respond to the impacts of climate change, we must act in ways to amplify and expand the scope of this Government Operations Climate Action Plan.

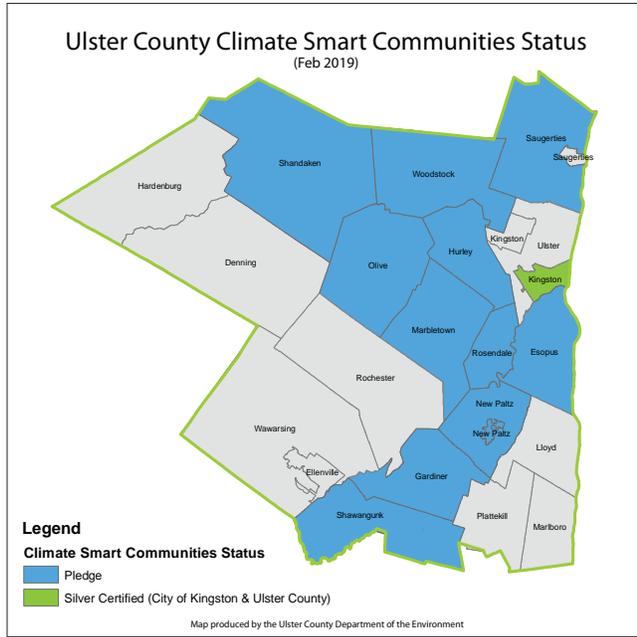


Figure 16.

## Using this Plan as a Framework for Other Municipalities and Organizations

There are twenty-three municipalities in Ulster County, not including the County government. Thirteen of those municipalities are registered NYS DEC Climate Smart Communities, having already pledged to take climate action in their community. The City of Kingston and Ulster County are the only communities certified with the Climate Smart Communities program (as of May 2019), and both have reached the Silver level, denoting high involvement and action. Also, as of May 2019, the City of Kingston is the only other municipality to have a municipal operations Climate Action Plan in Ulster County (although some other communities are working on plans).

To involve more Ulster County municipalities in climate action and the role of a government operations Climate Action Plan, direct municipal outreach as well as workshop sessions through the Ulster County Environmental Management Council are proposed. Municipalities that have already committed to climate action, through the CSC pledge, should be encouraged to complete a government operations CAP and could use Ulster County's plan as a template. Communities that have yet to take the CSC pledge, will continue to be encouraged to do so.

Another key way to expand the benefits of this CAP is for Ulster County to extend implementation opportunities to the municipalities whenever possible. Ulster County has successfully done this in the past with electric vehicle charging station through active outreach and technical support for Ulster County municipalities to site, apply for grant funding and install EV charging stations. This effort has yielded a robust municipal EV charging station network in our area. Another area of opportunity is training of municipal staff in energy efficient and green operations and maintenance. For the County's implementation of this CAP this is a key implementation activity which would also support green workforce development. A significant opportunity exists to extend any scheduled training opportunity to other municipal employees in Ulster County. Similar types of training initiatives have been offered on the topic of municipal stormwater management (and compliance with the NYS DEC MS4 program) for many years.

Other large institutions in Ulster County managing significant facilities and or fleets could also benefit from learning more about this plan. Opportunities for this outreach exist through the Ulster County Department of Economic Development.

## Expanding on the Scope of this Plan

### Adaptation and Resiliency on the County Level

An immediate next step, building on the work of this Climate Action Plan, is for Ulster County government to actively engage in planning for the impacts of

climate change to our operations. This initiative, the Ulster County Climate Change Adaptation & Resiliency Planning Project, is currently underway with grant support from the NYS DEC. The scope of this project includes these four main elements:

- 1 Characterize local climate change hazards
- 2 Identify and assess Ulster County Government operations vulnerabilities to climate change hazards
- 3 Develop strategies and tools to address recognized hazards and vulnerabilities for Ulster County Government
- 4 Support Ulster County municipalities in similar planning and adaptation efforts

## Why Adaptation and Resiliency? What Does Climate Change Mean for Ulster County?

There is scientific consensus that New York State and the Hudson Valley will see increases in temperature, increases in average annual precipitation as well as an increase in the frequency and intensity of precipitation events, as well as rising water levels along the Hudson River (ClimAid, Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan).

Annual temperatures are projected to increase between 4 and 6 degrees F by the 2050s and annual precipitation is projected to increase by 3-10% over the same period for our area (ClimAid). These primary climate impacts will lead to secondary climate impacts including flooding, drought and heat waves.

Climate effects of these primary and secondary impacts include: property damage, crop damage, reduced water quality, reduced air quality, increased number of high heat index days and increased exposure to vector borne diseases.

Ulster County's landscape diversity leads to a wide range of potential impacts and emerging hazards from a changing climate. Our agricultural sector could see impacts due to invasive species and heat stress. Impacts to habitat could potentially effect regionally significant pathways or refugia for plants and animals as they respond to climate change. Hudson River level rise, along with increased storm surge, will impact infrastructure, property

and safety along the shoreline.

For flooding in particular, there is ample documentation of our existing vulnerability. According to the NOAA Storms Events Database, there have been 115 flooding events in Ulster County since 1996. Eleven of those events have been damaging enough to warrant a Presidential disaster declaration. Ulster County ranks second in New York State for Presidential disaster declarations between 1960 to 2012 and sustained an estimated \$470 million in flood losses in that same period (2014 NYS Hazard Mitigation Plan). Increased intensity and frequency of storms will lead to more flood events and economic losses.

The Adaptation & Resiliency Plan will describe and assess climate change impacts and perform adaptation planning at a County level with the goal of developing implementable mitigation measures. Implementing the final plan will allow Ulster County to make significant strides in adapting to climate change at the County level while simultaneously supporting other Ulster County municipalities in undertaking similar efforts.

### Community Wide Climate Action Planning

The City of Kingston is the only municipality, to date, in Ulster County to complete a community level plan. A Community Climate Action Plan significantly increases the complexity of both the planning and analysis as well as the depth and breadth of the recommendations. However, the possibility to quantitatively reduce emissions through implementation are significantly greater.

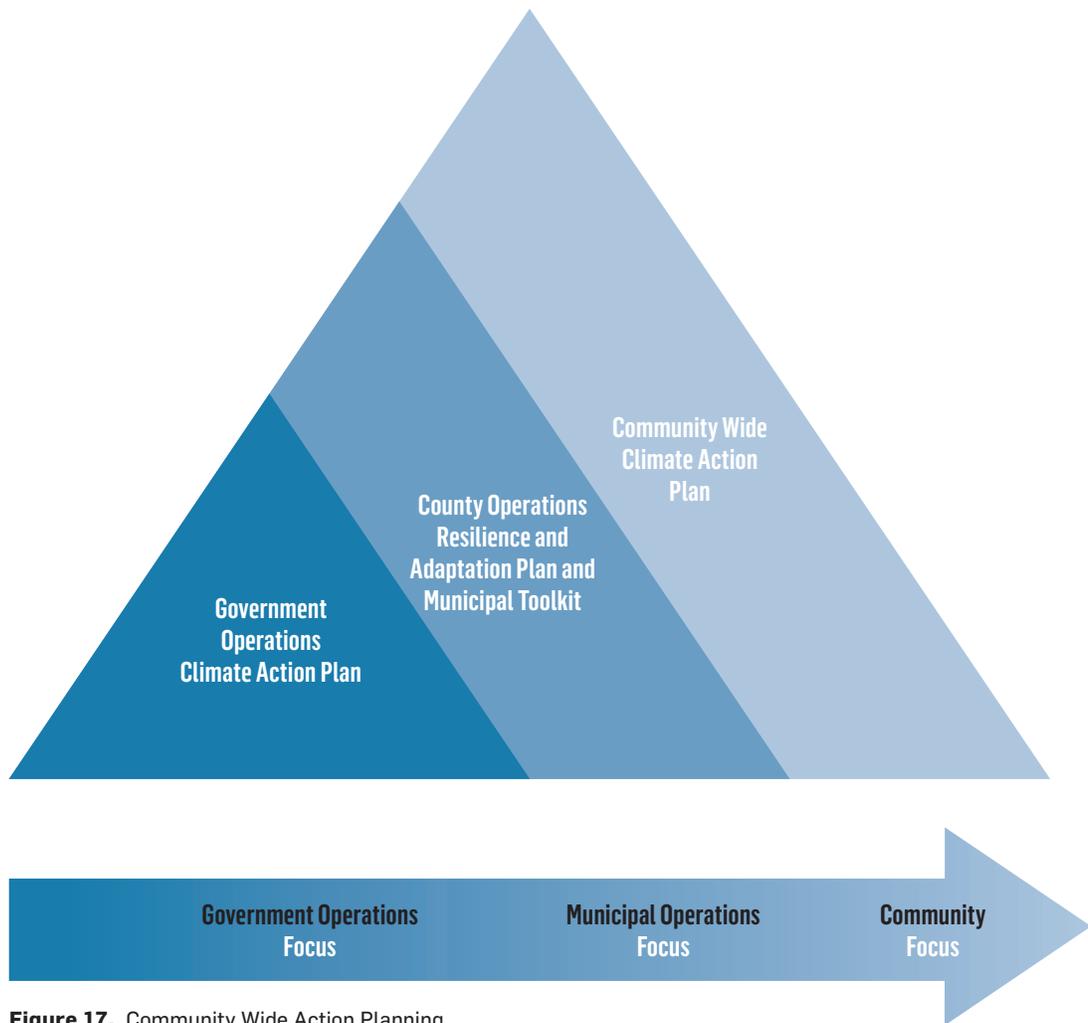


Figure 17. Community Wide Action Planning

A Community Climate Action Plan for Ulster County will build on the growing efforts by municipalities towards community wide energy efficiency and deployment of renewable energy. Plan development at the County level could also be used to link to significant economic development and workforce development initiatives

## **Building on other Plans and Initiatives**

The process of drafting the Adaptation & Resiliency Plan or any County level Climate Action Plan will build on and work with many other important projects including:

### **Culvert Assessment**

Ulster County completed an assessment of over 500 County and municipal culverts documenting their suitability for aquatic organism passage as well as hydraulic capacity. A goal of this effort, funded by the NYS DEC, was to assess the capacity of the culverts to pass flood flows under a range of future storm runoff scenarios and identify those most undersized to accommodate future flows. The County recently received another round of funding, through the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, to expand this assessment work and develop shovel ready designs for culvert replacement.

### **Core Habitat Mapping**

Ulster County worked with the Green Infrastructure Center ([gicinc.org](http://gicinc.org)) to develop and subsequently refine a core habitat data layer. This data layer provides information on corridors important for the landscape scale

migration of organisms as climate change impacts the suitability of certain areas for those. Additionally, these data could be used to prioritize areas which could also provide carbon sequestration services.

### **Healthy Ulster**

Ulster County Department of Health and Mental Health is engaged in a diverse and robust public health planning initiative focused on increasing the health of Ulster County residents through physical, programmatic and policy change. Public health impacts of climate change would be characterized and detailed through this proposed project and would be incorporated in the Healthy Ulster initiative.

### **Watershed Planning**

It is important to include watershed assessment and characterization information from these various efforts in any County wide climate change planning effort. In addition, information regarding the characterization of vulnerabilities at the County level may be of use to these watershed planning level efforts.

### **UC Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan**

More than one-hundred-fifty of the proposed mitigation projects identified in this plan are structure and infrastructure projects. The vast majority of these proposed projects/actions concern the relocation or protection of critical facilities and assets (to the 500-yr flood event) and the up-sizing of critical bridges and culverts in order to mitigate against the anticipated increase in intensity and frequency of future flooding events.

**In addition, any next steps to expand and amplify climate action in Ulster County should take into close consideration these important regional and NY State level initiatives.**

- **Climate Leadership and Community Projection Act** This recently enacted legislation sets ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals for New York State. As implementation plans and guidance documents become available, they should be closely considered in any County level plan or initiative.
  - **Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRRA)** This Act is an important piece of state legislation which mainstreams the consideration of climate change into state and local laws. As guidance continues to be developed for the implementation of CRRRA, the County will review these resources and implement them as appropriate.
  - **Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan** This comprehensive and wide ranging plan, produced in 2013, continues to live on through various regional working groups. We anticipate further consideration of the important recommendations in this plan as well as working partnership with those groups continuing to work on implementation.
  - **New York Rising** UC Department of Environment and Planning Department staff served on the planning committees for both the “Shandaken-Hardenburgh NYRCR Plan” and the “Ulster Communities
- NYRCR Plan.” These plans covered a total of twelve local municipalities in the County, and resulted in numerous featured and proposed projects. Several of the featured projects are currently being implemented with allocated funds, however, many other proposed NYRCR projects remain very valid, but to date, have no implementation funding or resources dedicated to them. Any subsequent climate action planning effort could build off of and expand upon the local effort already invested in identifying assets and conducting the risk analysis to determine resiliency projects.
- **PATHWAYS: Wildlife Habitat Connectivity in the Changing Climate of the Hudson Valley** This document identifies predicted corridors necessary for species migration in response to climate change. These predictions along with the County’s core habitat data would be a powerful resource to inform mitigation actions related to species and habitat conservation and adaption.
- We also anticipate that any subsequent climate action planning effort will utilize and build on various existing County level planning documents and initiatives including: the UC Open Space Plan, the Greenway Compact, Housing Strategies Plan, Ulster Tomorrow, Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Year 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, Ulster County Government Sustainability Initiatives Guide, and the Stormwater Management Program Plan. ■



# Appendices

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**Appendix A:** GHG Inventory Methodology and Assumptions

**Appendix B:** Completed Projects

**Appendix C:** Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

**Appendix D:** References and Additional Information

## Appendix A: GHG Inventory Methodology and Assumptions

To track progress toward our GHG emissions goals, all energy usage is monitored and tracked by the Ulster County Department of the Environment. The annual GHG emissions inventory is calculated by aggregating this data by sector, scope, source and type and converting to metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>) using EPA conversion factors.

### Ulster County Government Operations GHG Inventory Methodology

The County references the Local Government Operations Protocol, Version 1.1 (LGOP) as a standard for accounting and reporting GHG emissions from government operations.

This protocol was developed by Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI).

To the extent possible, Ulster County sets organizational boundaries for emissions accounting using the operational control approach. Per the ICLEI definition, Ulster County has operational control over a building or facility if either of these two conditions exist:

- Ulster County owns the building or facility, OR
- Ulster County has full authority to introduce and implement operational and health, safety and environmental policies.

The County accounts for leased facilities where it is possible to obtain the necessary

data. Currently, the County does not estimate emissions for spaces where only part of the building is leased and the space is not sub-metered.

### ICLEI Reporting Sectors

The County currently reports the following sectors and scopes:

- Buildings and Other Facilities: Scope 1 & 2
- Streetlights and Traffic Signals: Scope 2
- Transit Fleet: Scope 1
- Vehicle Fleet: Scope 1 & 2
- Water Delivery Facilities: Scope 1 & 2

Ulster County does not own or operate facilities in the following sectors:

- Wastewater Facilities
- Port Facilities
- Airport Facilities
- Power Generation Facilities
- Solid Waste Facilities

### Other Process and Fugitive Emissions

Ulster County currently does not collect data or estimate values for process and fugitive emissions.

### Biogenic source emissions

CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from biofuel usage are not included as Scope 1 emissions in this inventory in accordance with ICLEI protocol, as the carbon concerned is of biogenic origin

and would have been emitted to the atmosphere through the natural process of decay. Biogenic emissions totals from combustion of biofuels are tracked and reported as supplemental information in this report.

Ulster County assumes all gasoline purchased for fleet, transit and non-road purposes is an E10 ethanol blend (10% ethanol). Since 2015, the Ulster County transit fleet has used a B5 biodiesel (5% biodiesel) blend operationally approximately 50% of the year.

### Optional Scope 3 Emissions

Ulster County currently reports one Scope 3 source: Employee Commute. Usage data was estimated for each reporting year based on current number of employees

and assumptions based on employee home of record data and an employee survey conducted in November 2018. Additional notes on employee commute methodology are contained in Table 25.



In 2010, Ulster County installed its first renewable energy system at the New Paltz Highway Substation. This 30.6 kw PV system is located "behind the meter" at the substation.

**Table 12.** Renewable Generation Sites

Site	System Capacity	Interconnection Type	Installation Year
New Paltz Substation Salt Shed	30.6 KW DC	Behind the meter	2011
Town of Ulster Landfill	1.9 MW DC	Remote net metering	2018

**Table 13.** Total Renewable Energy Generation (onsite and local generation)

Reporting Year	Energy Generation (kWh)
2018	927,285 <sup>1</sup>
2017	37,447
2016	42,164
2015	37,793
2014	36,862
2013	40,358
2012	31,203
2011	25,754

1 The Ulster Landfill Solar project came online in June 2018.

As mandated in Executive Orders 1–2014, 1–2016, 2–2018, and 1–2019, Ulster County purchases 100% renewable power through the retirement of Green-e Certified Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), thereby offsetting Scope 2 emissions. Additionally, Ulster County offsets 100% of its Scope 1 and 3 emissions through the purchase of Climate Action Reserve certified carbon credits.

These offsets are not counted as actual reductions in emissions (i.e. as progress toward GHG reduction goals). The GHG accounting in this inventory report assumes the absence of all offsets.

### **Emissions Factors Disclosure**

Ulster County uses emissions factors published by the EPA in the document *Emissions Factors for Greenhouse Gas Inventories*<sup>1</sup> (last modified 3/9/3018).

100-year global warming potential (GWP) multipliers were applied as published in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report.<sup>2</sup>

Ulster County does collect and maintain data on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for vehicle fleet and transit fleet vehicles. However, to simplify the accounting process for mobile combustion, methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions were estimated on a per-gallon basis as described in the New York Community and Regional GHG Inventory

Guidance (Version 1.0, September 2015).<sup>3</sup> To do so, CO<sub>2</sub> emission values were multiplied by factors of 0.001 for CH<sub>4</sub> and 0.018 for N<sub>2</sub>O to obtain an emissions value.

## **2012 Baseline GHG Inventory**

Ulster County completed its first GHG inventory for government operations in 2012, which was subsequently set as the baseline year. The 2012 report included emissions from purchased electricity, stationary fuel combustion, mobile combustion from government vehicle fleets, as well as emissions from County employee commutes.

### **Baseline adjustments**

The scope of Ulster County government operations has undergone structural changes since the 2012 baseline inventory. To accurately compare current operating conditions to the baseline year and quantify GHG increases or decreases over time, Ulster County normalizes its baseline to account for changes that are due to a change in the services provided by the government.

For example, in 2013, the Golden Hill Health Care center was sold to a private service provider and the County no longer needed to provide this service to its constituents. This change reduced the County's purchase of utilities and fleet

1 Available at: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/emission-factors\\_mar\\_2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/emission-factors_mar_2018_0.pdf)

2 Available at: [https://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch2s2-10-2.html](https://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch2s2-10-2.html)

3 Available at: [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/ghgguide.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/ghgguide.pdf)

fuel significantly, saving approximately 3.5 MWh of electricity use, 53,000 gallons of fuel oil, and 1,500 gallons of fleet fuels per year. Because this was a divestiture of services, the 2012 baseline GHG inventory was updated to remove the emissions from this property and government function.

For its GHG inventory, the County uses the following set of rules to determine whether a baseline adjustment is warranted:



Golden Hill Health Care Center

**Table 14.** Baseline Adjustment Methodology

Structural Change	Baseline Adjustment?
New areas of government jurisdiction (or insourcing)	Yes
Acquisitions of property due to growth	No
Divestitures of property due to change in jurisdiction (or outsourcing)	Yes
Divestitures of property due to consolidation or efficiency of services	No
Access to energy use data that was not previously available	Yes

**Table 15.** Adjustments to Normalize 2012 GHG Baseline

Baseline Change	Effective Year <sup>4</sup>	Reporting Sector	Scope	Change to Baseline Quantity (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e)
Golden Hill Health Care Center	2012	Buildings and Other Facilities / Vehicle Fleet	1 & 2	-1,216.4
Patriot's Project—Veteran's Housing	2014	Buildings and Other Facilities	1 & 2	+18.9
Sheriff's Substation Wawarsing <sup>**5</sup>	2015	Buildings and Other Facilities	1 & 2	+6.3
Family and Child Advocacy Center	2016	Buildings and Other Facilities	1 & 2	+9.7

4 Effective year is the first full calendar year of energy-use data.

5 No data available for 2012.

**Table 16.** 2012 Normalized Baseline Emissions Summary (Metric Tons)

		CO <sub>2</sub> e	CO <sub>2</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O
SCOPE 1 DIRECT EMISSIONS	Mobile Combustion	4,801.5	4,709.8	4.8	86.9
	Stationary Combustion	2,372.7	2,366.0	2.1	4.6
SCOPE 2 INDIRECT EMISSIONS	Purchased Electricity	2,290.3	2,281.7	2.2	6.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9,464.5</b>	<b>9,357.6</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>97.9</b>

**Table 17.** 2012 Normalized GHG Emissions By Sector (Metric Tons CO<sub>2</sub>e)

		SCOPE 1	SCOPE 2
Buildings and Other Facilities	Purchased Electricity		2,279.4
	Stationary Combustion	2,369.1	
Streetlights and Traffic Signals	Purchased Electricity		4.8
Transit Fleet	Mobile Combustion	1,670.5	
Vehicle Fleet	Mobile Combustion	3,131.0	
	Purchased Electricity		
Water Delivery Facilities	Purchased Electricity		6.0
	Stationary Combustion	4.0	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,174.6</b>	<b>2,290.2</b>

## Biogenic Emissions

In 2012, Ulster County emitted 115.3 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e from biogenic sources. These emissions are attributed solely to the mobile combustion of ethanol.

**Table 18.** 2012 Biogenic Emissions (Metric Tons CO<sub>2</sub>e)

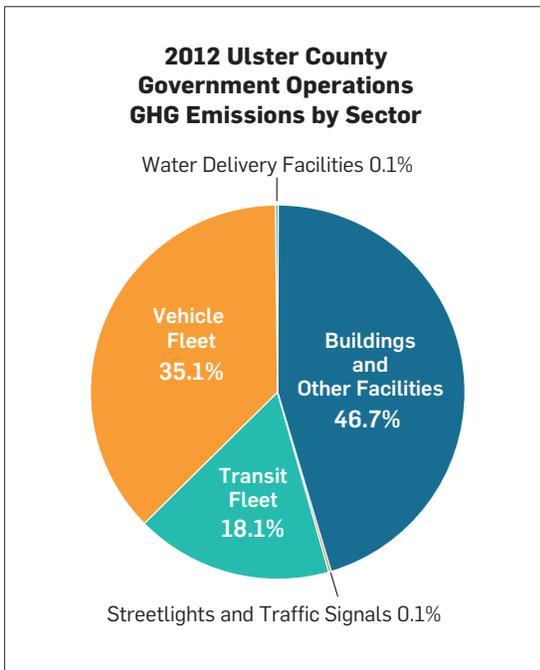
Sector	Biogenic Emissions
Transit	2.6
Vehicle	112.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115.3</b>

## Optional Scope 3 Emissions

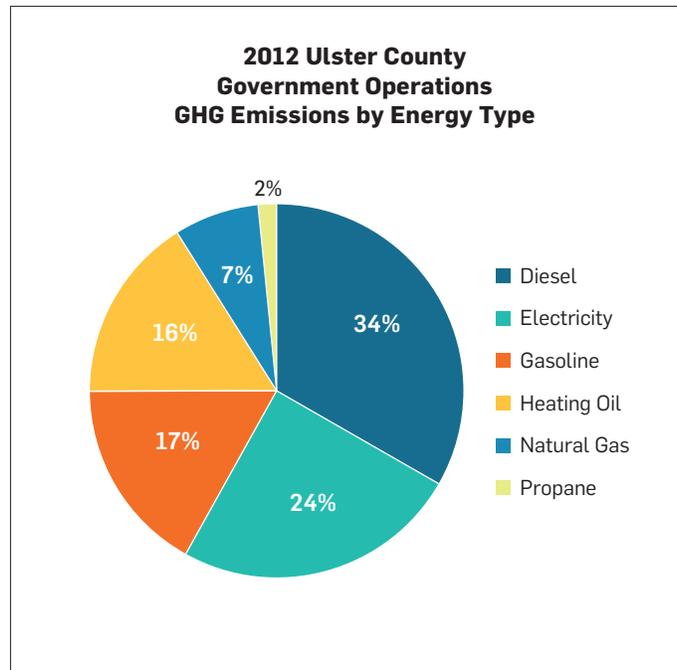
For the 2012 baseline, Ulster County estimated the anthropogenic Scope 3 emissions attributed to employee commutes as 2,341 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e. See Appendix C for assumptions and calculations.

**Table 19.** 2012 Scope 3 Emissions (Metric Tons)

		CO <sub>2</sub> e	CO <sub>2</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O
SCOPE 3	Mobile Combustion	2,341.0	2,294.3	2.2	44.3



**Figure 18.**



**Figure 19.**

## 2018 GHG Inventory Update

The GHG inventory for Ulster County was updated in 2019 using calendar year 2018 data.

**Table 20.** 2018 GHG Emissions Summary (Metric Tons)

		CO2e	CO2	CH4	N2O
SCOPE 1 DIRECT EMISSIONS	Mobile Combustion	5,018.7	4,921.8	5.1	91.8
	Stationary Combustion	2,755.9	2,748.8	2.3	4.8
SCOPE 2 INDIRECT EMISSIONS	Purchased Electricity	1,462.9	1,455.9	2.6	4.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9,237.5</b>	<b>9,126.5</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>101.0</b>

**Table 21.** 2018 GHG Emissions By Sector (Metric Tons CO2e)

		SCOPE 1	SCOPE 2
Buildings and Other Facilities	Purchased Electricity		1,452.2
	Stationary Combustion	2,749.2	
Streetlights and Traffic Signals	Purchased Electricity		3.8
Transit Fleet	Mobile Combustion	1,578.9	
Vehicle Fleet	Mobile Combustion	3,439.7	
	Purchased Electricity		1.1
Water Delivery Facilities	Purchased Electricity		5.8
	Stationary Combustion	6.7	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,774.6</b>	<b>1,462.9</b>

## Biogenic Emissions

In 2018, Ulster County emitted 186 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e from biogenic sources. These emissions are entirely attributed to the mobile combustion of ethanol and biodiesel.

**Table 22.** 2018 Biogenic Emissions (Metric Tons CO<sub>2</sub>e)

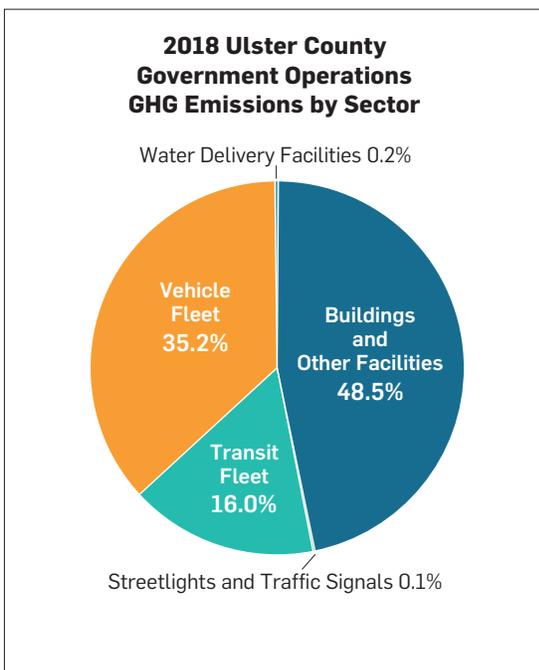
Sector	Biogenic Emissions
Transit	51.1
Vehicle	134.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186.0</b>

## Optional Scope 3 Emissions

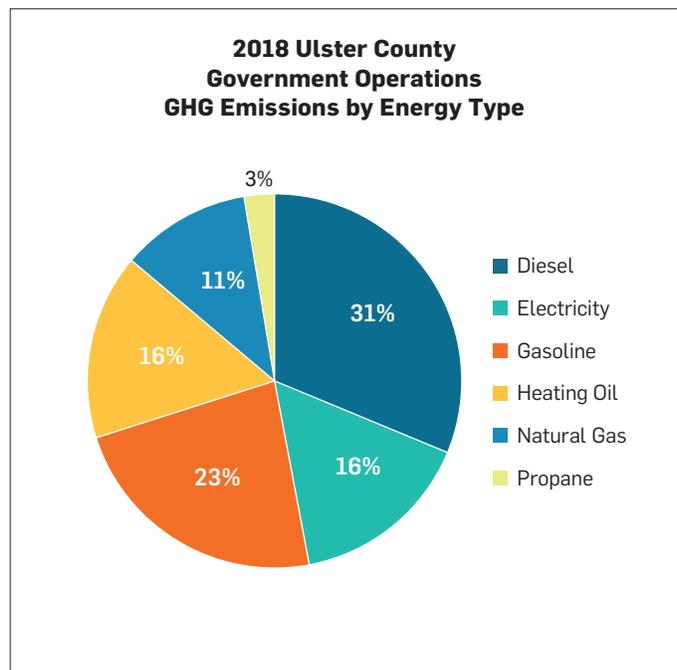
In 2018, Ulster County estimated the anthropogenic Scope 3 emissions attributed to employee commutes as 2,127 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e.

**Table 23.** 2018 Scope 3 Emissions (Metric Tons)

		CO <sub>2</sub> e	CO <sub>2</sub>	CH <sub>4</sub>	N <sub>2</sub> O
SCOPE 3	Mobile Combustion	2,127.1	2,084.6	2.2	40.3



**Figure 20.**



**Figure 21.**

**Table 24.** Scope 1 and 2 Activity Data from GHG Inventory by Energy Type

Energy Type	2012	2017	2018
Biodiesel (gal)	—	3,226	3,521
Diesel (gal)	306,069	269,670	276,476
Electricity (kWh)	12,305,084	11,913,628	10,811,574
Ethanol (gal)	20,056	25,135	26,562
Gasoline (gal)	180,508	226,218	239,060
Heating Oil (gal)	151,601	126,728	144,424
Natural Gas (CCF)	120,952	181,154	189,892
Propane (gal)	28,227	35,416	42,194

## Scope 3 Employee Commute Calculations

The methodology below was developed by VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. for Ulster County's 2012 greenhouse gas inventory using employee surveys and home address to work location mapping techniques.

**Table 25.** Assumptions for Employee Commute Calculations

Vehicle Type	Percentage of Employees Using	People per vehicle	Vehicle MPG
Single Occupancy Vehicle	81%	1	21.64
Carpool	10%	2.44	21.64
Motorcycle	1%	1	43.38
Transit	3%		
Bike	1%		
Walk	4%		
Work at home	0%		
Other	0%		

Average one-way commute length: 11 miles

Workdays per year: 240

Fuel type: E10 gasoline

**Table 26.** Employee Data

Year	Number of Full-time equivalent employees
2012	1,390
2017	1,257
2018	1,263

## Appendix B: Completed Projects

Project	Completion Year	Estimated Annual Resource Savings (kBtu)	Estimated Annual Emissions Reduction (MT CO2e)
Ulster County Area Transportation (UCAT) / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2010	—	—
Ulster County Office Building / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	118,618	5
Court House / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	251,608	10
Golden Hill Office Building / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	265,412	10
Information Services / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	160,345	6
Ulster County Office Building / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	118,617	5
Records Storage / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	95,782	4
Ulster County Area Transportation (UCAT) / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2011	106,113	4
Golden Hill Office Building / HVAC Equipment / Cooling Tower Replacement	2012	48,478	2
Public Works / HVAC Equipment / Cooling Tower Replacement	2012	13,873	1
Crown Street Lighting / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	—	—
Trudy Resnick Farber / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	29,855	1
Ulster County Office Building / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	56,537	2
Golden Hill Office Building / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	35,365	1
Heavy Vehicle Maintenance/Quarry / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	268,975	11
Ulster Avenue Office Complex (DSS, BRC) / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	198,903	8
Public Works / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2014	—	—
Ulster County Law Enforcement Center / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2015	668,609	26
Probation Department / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2015	43,639	2
Carr / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	7,773	0
Court House / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	186,797	7
Dept of Environment / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	6,322	0
Emergency Management / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	39,214	2
Golden Hill Office Building / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	176,359	7
Probation Department / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	47,420	2
Public Works / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	34,007	1
Records Storage / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	53,483	2
Trudy Resnick Farber / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	126,708	5
Ulster County Area Transportation (UCAT) / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	88,811	3
Ulster County Law Enforcement Center / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	944,541	37
Ulster County Office Building / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2015	344,824	14
Carr / HVAC Equipment / DHW Heater Replacement	2015	—	—

## Appendix B: Completed Projects *continued*

Project	Completion Year	Estimated Annual Resource Savings (kBtu)	Estimated Annual Emissions Reduction (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e)
Court House / Lighting / Exterior Lighting	2015	60,491	2
Ulster County Law Enforcement Center / Scheduling / Building Scheduling	2015	1,199,290	69
Records Storage / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2016	—	—
Court House / HVAC Equipment / Replace cooling tower	2018	—	—
Ulster County Area Transportation (UCAT) / Lighting / Exterior lighting	2018	53,234	2
Quarry Mechanics Complex / HVAC Equipment / Install radiant system boiler(s) and controls	2018	—	—
Install HVAC/air exchange equipment	2018	—	—
Ulster County Law Enforcement Center / Lighting / Interior Lighting Upgrade	2018	2,476,177	97
Quarry Welding Shop / HVAC Equipment / Install HVAC / air exchange equipment	2018	—	—

## Appendix C: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

**ASHRAE** American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers.

**Additionality** The principal that carbon offsets must represent real, permanent, verified, and enforceable reductions. Which must come from activities or project that are additional to what would occur under a business-as-usual scenario.

**AVL** Auto Vehicle Locator.

**BAS** Building Automation System.

**Biodiesel Blend** a blend of diesel and bio fuel, for example a 5% biodiesel blend will be denoted as B5, and a 20% blend will be denoted as B20.

**Btu** British thermal unit, a measure of heat equal to the amount of energy it takes to raise one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit, also, the heat given by a common match flame.

**CAP** Climate Action Plan.

**CAR** Climate Action Reserve, one third party verification available for Carbon Credits.

**CCF** Centum Cubic Feet, representing 100 cubic feet

**CDG** Community Distributed Generation.

**Carbon Credit** a carbon credit is a third-party verified instrument representing the emissions reduction or removal of one metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Project-based offsets represent emissions reductions that are real, measurable, permanent, in excess of regulatory requirements and common practice and are additional to business-as-usual, net of leakage, and used only once.

**CDD** Cooling Degree Day.

**CH<sub>4</sub>** Methane.

**CO<sub>2</sub>** Carbon dioxide.

**CO<sub>2</sub>e** Carbon dioxide equivalent, wherein all greenhouse gas emissions are combined to a single metric; methane has 25 times the heat-trapping capability as carbon dioxide while nitrous oxide has 298 times the heat-trapping capability as carbon dioxide. For example, one pound of methane, one pound of nitrous oxide, and one pound of carbon dioxide, will have the equivalent heat-trapping capability of 324 pounds of carbon dioxide. It should be noted that methane and nitrous oxide are the only two other GHGs included in this report in the CO<sub>2</sub>e calculation.

**Coefficient of Performance** the ratio of the energy output to the input.

**CRRA** Community Risk and Resiliency Act.

**CSC** Climate Smart Communities.

## Appendix C: Glossary *continued*

**ECM** Energy Conservation Measure.

**EO** Executive Order.

**EMC** Environmental Management Council.

**EPA** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**ESCO** Energy Services Company.

**EV** Electric Vehicle.

**EVSE** Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment, a charging standard to ensure safe charging.

**Gal** Gallon.

**GHG** Greenhouse Gas. Carbon dioxide, methane, and other gases that accumulate in the atmosphere inhibiting radiant heat loss to space.

**GRF** Green Revolving Fund.

**GRITS** Green Revolving Investment Tracking System.

**GSHP** Ground Source Heat Pump.

**GVWR** Gross Vehicle Weight Rating.

**GWP** Global Warming Potential.

**HDD** Heating Degree Day.

**HVAC** Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning.

**ICLEI** International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives, this membership organization is also known as Local Governments for Sustainability.

**IECC** International Energy Conservation Code.

**IPCC** International panel on Climate Change.

**kW** kilowatt, a measure of instantaneous electric power equal to one thousand watts.

**kWh** kilowatt-hour, an amount of electrical energy, as one kilowatt of power over a period of one hour. Equal to 3,412 British thermal units (Btu).

**LED** Light Emitting Diode.

**LEED** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the most widely used green building rating system.

**LGOP** Local Government Operations Protocol.

**MPG** Miles per gallon.

**MT** Metric Ton, equal to 2206 lbs.

**MW** Megawatt, a measure of instantaneous electric power equal to one million watts.

**MWh** Megawatt hours, a measure of power over time.

**Net Carbon Neutral Operations Strategy**

a strategy to achieve net zero carbon emissions by balancing carbon released with an equivalent amount offset.

**N2O** Nitrous oxide.

**NYPA** New York Power Authority

**NYSDEC** New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

**NYSERDA** New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

**NYSOGS** New York State Office of General Services.

**Offset** An action intended to compensate for the emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by an entity, by reducing carbon emissions or sequestering carbon elsewhere. It generally takes the form of a tradeable market instrument that can be purchased and retired in equal quantity to the emissions produced.

**REC** renewable energy credit, or REC (pronounced: rek), is a market-based instrument that represents the property rights to the environmental, social and other non-power attributes of renewable electricity generation. RECs are issued when one megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity is generated and delivered to the electricity grid from a renewable energy resource. It is generally acceptable to claim the use of renewable power when retiring RECs from the North American market.

**RNEM** Remote Net Energy Metering.

**Scope 1 emissions** All direct GHG emissions (with the exception of direct CO2 emissions from biogenic sources).

**Scope 2 emissions** Indirect GHG emissions associated with the consumption of purchased or acquired electricity, steam, heating, or cooling.

**Scope 3 emissions** All other indirect emissions not covered in Scope 2, such as emissions resulting from the extraction and production of purchased materials and fuels, transport-related activities in vehicles not owned or controlled by the reporting entity (e.g., employee commuting and business travel), outsourced activities, waste disposal, etc.

**SC-CO2** Social Cost of Carbon dioxide.

**therm** A unit of natural gas, equal to 100,000 Btu.

**UC** Ulster County.

**UCAT** Ulster County Area Transit.

**UCDoE** Ulster County Department of the Environment.

**VMT** vehicle miles traveled.

## Appendix D: References and Additional Information

### **Building Benchmarking Report (2018)**

Available here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/sustainability-energy/building-energy-benchmarking>

### **Emissions Factors for Greenhouse Gas Inventories (EPA)**

Available here: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/emission-factors\\_mar\\_2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-03/documents/emission-factors_mar_2018_0.pdf)

### **Green Fleet Report (2018)**

Available here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/environment/sustainability-energy/green-fleet-initiative>

### **Green Revolving Investment Tracking System**

Available here: <http://www.endowmentinstitute.org/>

### **ICLEI LGOP Version 1.1**

Available here: <http://icleiusa.org/ghg-protocols/>

### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report**

Available here: <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar4/>

### **Mid Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan**

Available here: <https://www.orangecountygov.com/300/Mid-Hudson-Regional-Sustainability-Plan/>

### **New York Community and Regional GHG Inventory Guidance (Version 1.0, September 2015)**

Available here: [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/ghgguide.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/ghgguide.pdf)

### **New York State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan Volume 1: New York State Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Available here: <http://www.dhses.ny.gov/recovery/mitigation/plan.cfm>

### **NOAA Storm Events Database**

Available here: <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/>

### **Responding to Climate Change in New York State (ClimAID)**

Available here: <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/Research%20and%20Development%20Technical%20Reports/Environmental%20Research%20and%20Development%20Technical%20Reports/Response%20to%20Climate%20Change%20in%20New%20York>

### **Ulster County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017)**

Available here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/emergency-services/hazard-mitigation/draft-plan-update/>

### **Ulster County Sustainability Initiatives Guide**

Available here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/department-environment>





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## PE10 Action: Updates to Strategies & Plans

4 Points

### A. Why is this action important?

As circumstances change and new opportunities or challenges arise, local governments must review and update climate action strategies and the associated planning documents. Regularly updating a climate action plan ensures that it is a living document that charts the course for the local government's efforts toward reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

### B. How to implement this action

The process for updating a climate action plan is similar to the process for developing an initial climate action plan. Refer to the guidelines below for structuring the planning processes:

#### Project Mobilization:

- Convene an internal advisory committee composed of representatives from all departments.
- Organize an external advisory board composed of key stakeholders (if the original advisory board remains active, review the board membership and determine if it must be modified).
- Develop a project plan and timeline for the plan update.
- Develop a draft scope of work for the plan update, with key tasks and proposed updates or changes to the plan.

#### Analyze and Develop Strategies:

- Review the strategies in the current plan and determine, based on current implementation plans, if they are sufficient to allow the community to meet its government operations and community-wide emissions reductions goals.
- Adjust existing strategies and add new strategies as appropriate.
- Expand the scope of the plan, as appropriate.
- Review the GHG emission reduction targets and revise or update as appropriate.
- Develop a draft plan for public input.

#### Gather Public Input:

- Perform public outreach to gather input on updates to existing strategies and new strategies.
- Use a variety of outreach methods to engage the public, such as town hall meetings, social media, direct outreach to key stakeholders, and other approaches.

#### Finalize and Release the Plan

- Incorporate feedback from the outreach process and finalize the plan.
- Release the plan at a public event with the highest elected official.

Alternatively, an updated appendix to the original plan with revised or new strategies can be developed. Ideally, the GHG reduction benefits of each strategy have been estimated and provided. The public should also have an opportunity to either assist with the development of or, at a minimum, provide comment on the new or revised strategies.

### C. Time frame, project costs, resource needs

The time frame to update a climate action plan is similar to the timing involved in developing an initial climate action plan; however, local governments will benefit from having completed the planning process before. The level of effort involved in updating the plan depends on the scope of the proposed changes and updates to the plan. Local governments typically need about one year to update a climate action plan or similar plan. Project costs may include staff time, intern time, consultants' time, and marketing materials. Resource needs may include information-technology equipment to deliver presentations and for hosting meetings online for those who cannot attend in person, meeting space, and tools to conduct analyses. Developing an appendix with new strategies may not take as long so a slight reduction in project costs could be achieved, but the resource needs will be similar to that of a full climate action plan update.

#### **D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?**

This action is applicable to all types of local governments. The department or office with the responsibility for leading the climate efforts is most likely to be responsible for this action. These activities are typically led by the chief elected official's office, the city manager's office, or the departments of environment or planning with assistance from the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) task force. Cross-department involvement and support are recommended.

#### **E. How to obtain points for this action**

Local governments that update plans and strategies in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines described here are eligible for four points.

#### **F. What to submit**

Submit a copy of the updated climate action plan or similar plan (or the appendix to the original plan with updated or new strategies). Provide evidence that the plan was publicly released. The update to the plan must have taken place within five years prior to the application date.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

#### **G. Links to additional resources or best practices**

- [CSC Climate Action Planning Guide](#): This 28-page guide introduces the concepts behind climate action planning and provides a framework for developing a plan to reduce GHG emissions. It includes information on creating plans for government operations and for the community.
- [Science Based Targets Initiative](#): This initiative provides guidance on setting GHG targets that are science-based, meaning they are aligned with the GHG reductions required to keep global temperature increase below 2°C compared to preindustrial temperatures. The initiative is focused on private companies but the methods are applicable to local governments who want detailed methods for setting science-based GHG targets.
- [New York, NY Recent Reports and PlaNYC Progress Report](#)

#### **H. Recertification requirements**

Both the government operations and community climate action plans developed for original certification must have been updated within the five years prior to application for recertification.