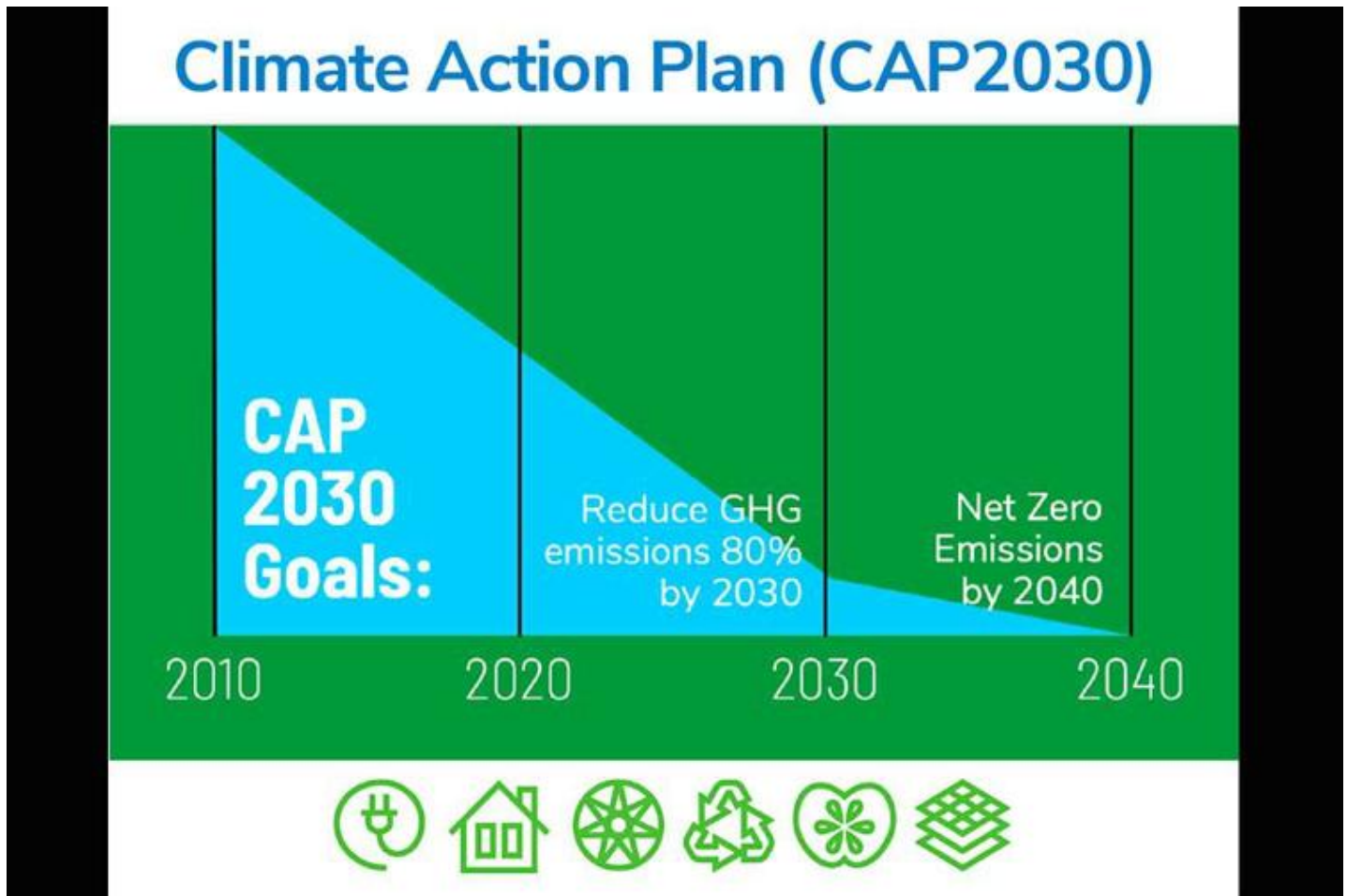


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# Bedford Town Board adopts new 10-year climate action plan

By Jeff Morris  
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The 2030 Climate Action Plan adopted by the Bedford Town Board calls for an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2040.

Courtesy of Bedford 2020

By JEFF MORRIS

The town board has adopted a new climate action plan, setting out to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and ultimately, net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

Known as Climate Action Plan 2030, or CAP2030 for short, the new plan, like its predecessor, was developed in conjunction with Bedford 2020, the tax-exempt climate action organization founded in 2010 with its mission to engage the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect natural resources.

Adoption of CAP2030 was voted on at the Tuesday town board meeting. Supervisor Chris Burdick said, “One of the things we did with the 2020 plan, was adopt it as a chapter in the town comprehensive plan. I would like to see certain provisions of the new plan be incorporated in the new comprehensive plan.”

Town Director of Planning Jeff Osterman concurred, saying the goal of the committees working on that project is to pick those pieces that fit into the comprehensive plan and incorporate them.

The new comprehensive plan is scheduled for completion later this year. “We are as committed to reaching our new goals as we were with the first ones,” said Midge Iorio, executive director of Bedford 2020. “More important, I want to thank the entire community in advance for your commitment to achieve our climate goals by 2030.”

In its resolution adopting CAP2030, the town board stated that climate change “poses a massive threat to the American economy, the well-being of our community, the environment and climate stability and underscores the need for immediate climate emergency action at all levels of government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

The resolution further enumerated impacts “already wrought” by climate change, including “increased and intensifying wildfires, floods, rising seas, droughts and extreme weather,” and stated that human health has already been, and will continue to be, impacted by climate change.

In addition to citing the threats posed by climate change, the board pointed to strong economic benefits that accrue from taking local action. Among those, it listed job creation tied to new businesses and expansion of existing businesses engaged in climate mitigation services; potential lowering of heating costs, and reduced pollution, due to electrification; and reduction of unplanned, high-cost town expenditures in response to major weather events and climate disasters. Such events, it said, are estimated to at least triple in the next 70 years if greenhouse gases are not reduced.

Other cost savings are expected through lower energy prices as more affordable ways are identified to procure renewable energy, generation of which is also expected to decline in price. Efforts to increase efficiency in town buildings and operations are also anticipated, further reducing energy consumption and waste.

While CAP2030 enumerates goals and lists priorities, it essentially provides a framework without specifics on how the climate goals are to be achieved. Those details are still to be worked out.

Over the past several weeks, Bedford 2020 has invited community input on different aspects of the new climate action plan during three virtual town hall sessions. Ms. Iorio has previously stated that ongoing dialogue is needed to fill out the plan.

According to the plan and the town's resolution, achieving an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 will require eliminating 75,737 metric tons of emissions. In order to attain these aggressive goals, the majority of Bedford's reductions will need to come from the energy and transportation sectors.

In addition, municipal operations will need to eliminate an estimated 1,264 metric tons of greenhouse gases over the same time period, the plan and resolution stated.

Also this week, in recognition of its new 10-year plan, Bedford 2020 announced it will officially rename itself "Bedford 2030" in the fall. Along with looking a decade forward, the town board resolution also looks backward at what has been achieved over the 10 years since the 2020 climate action plan was adopted. It notes that the Bedford community has already achieved substantial progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and surpassed its 20% by 2020 community-wide reduction goal three years ahead of schedule. A report issued last year showed that, as of 2017, the town lowered emissions 44% compared to a 2004 baseline.

A provision in CAP2030 states Bedford 2020 and the town will explore ways to obtain more detailed community emissions data to better inform actions, programming and progress.

Bedford's actions are not taking place in a vacuum. New York state has already passed the Climate Leadership and Protection Act. That sets into law statewide reductions of greenhouse gas emissions of 40% of 1990 levels by 2030, and 85% by 2050.

## Jeff Morris

Jeff Morris is a staff reporter at The Record-Review where he covers the Town of Bedford and the Katonah-Lewisboro School District. Prior to joining the paper he was a reporter and columnist for the Lewisboro Ledger and a business magazine editor.