



LEARNING  
SERIES



ONE  
REGION  
FORWARD

# Lessons from Climate Smart Communities

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.



**RESILIENT  
COMMUNITIES**  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- AICP members can earn Certification Maintenance (CM) credits for this activity.
- AICP members must be in attendance for the duration of the event in order to receive CM Credit.
- More information about AICP's CM program can be found at [www.planning.org/cm](http://www.planning.org/cm).

## CERTIFICATION CREDITS



The American Planning Association's  
Professional Institute  
**American Institute  
of Certified Planners**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

# Lessons from Climate Smart Communities?

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## AGENDA

- 10:00 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- 10:10 a.m. **Climate Smart Communities Program Overview**  
**Dazzle Ekblad**, Climate Policy Analyst for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
- 10:25 a.m. **Lessons from Climate Smart Communities**  
**Austin Tylec**, Mayor, City of North Tonawanda  
**Bonnie Lawrence**, Deputy Commissioner of Environment and Planning, Erie County
- 11:00 a.m. **Q&A**
- 11:30 a.m. **Closing Remarks**
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# ONE REGION FORWARD



A Regional Plan for Sustainable Development in Buffalo Niagara



[www.oneregionforward.org](http://www.oneregionforward.org)



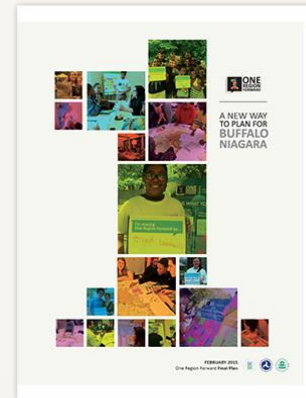
# A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara

Performance-based, not  
prescriptive

Not “One Size, Fits All”

Designed to be implemented  
by many

Driven by collaboration and  
coordination



# Supported by strategies developed by 100+ local experts and stakeholders...



A NEW WAY TO PLAN | HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### Pursue neighborhood-specific asset-based strategies for redevelopment.

ces for housing and neighborhood strategically targeted where new strong neighborhoods nearby, engage active residents and helping markets grow again. Municipal ion with community based its is key to set strategy, conduct n align capital investments with

What if we had robust tools to address vacancy and abandonment?



#### MOMENTUM TO BUILD ON

The Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation – Buffalo Niagara’s new land bank – is now up and running. Equipped with new powers from the New York State Legislature, the agency is beginning to acquire distressed properties, preparing them for redevelopment, and putting these properties in the hands of responsible new owners. The new land bank is an essential element in addressing 77,000 tax delinquent loans in Erie County while also promoting neighborhood redevelopment and will projects in both counties.

A NEW WAY TO PLAN | HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### WHAT WE COULD DO DIFFERENTLY RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

#### Develop a regional “hub and corridor” transportation system.

Although decades of “sprawl without growth” have created a land use pattern for which it is increasingly difficult to provide convenient and energy efficient transportation services, the historic pattern of development in our region still offers an opportunity to match transportation – and transit – to land use. The region grew up along the major arteries emanating from Buffalo and Niagara Falls and its outlying villages connected to them, creating a system of hubs and corridors (e.g. Broadway as a corridor with hubs at Fillmore Avenue, and the villages of Depew, Lancaster and Aledo). If we concentrate development of jobs, housing and infrastructure in these hubs and corridors, we can create a pattern that is more efficient and can be better served by transportation.

#### High quality transit.

The past decade has seen steady growth in transit ridership after decades of declining ridership, falling revenues, and service cuts. Elimination of federal operating subsidies and constraints on state support have compounded the loss of farebox revenues. Previous service cuts continue to limit ridership growth and the revenues that would come with it. All of this has occurred during decades of sprawl without growth and rising automobile use. Recent growth in ridership, however, combined with developments in the Metro Rail corridor, offer a ray of hope that the situation can be significantly improved. A program of targeted service improvements, partnerships with major institutional destinations (e.g. the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus), and well-designed incentives and promotions could shift the momentum in favor of transit. None of this, however, can happen without additional funding. The region should make transit funding and system improvement a top priority for advocacy and action. Additionally, concentrated development patterns that promote walking and may effectively be served by transit can reduce transportation costs for users as well as the costs of public services and infrastructure. This in turn can increase the return on

What if public transit was expanded where there is demand?



#### MOMENTUM TO BUILD ON

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority has planning under way with an analysis of alternatives for transportation improvements in the “Buffalo-Aledo Corridor.” Because of growth in the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and its location the area has been identified as most likely to draw ridership needed to support high quality transit



#### seed planning.

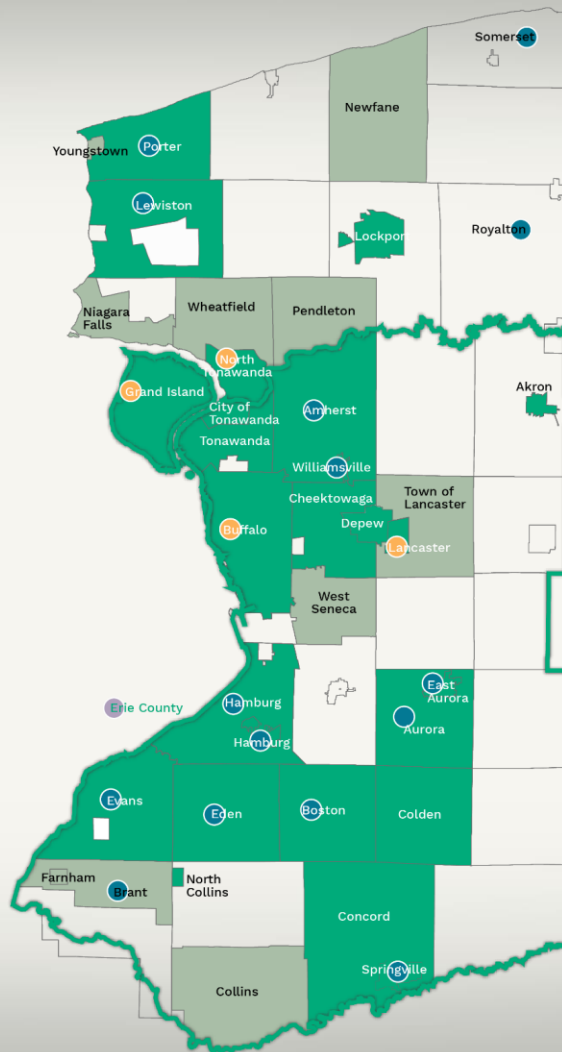
stakeholders can maximize participation, focus on quality of life improvements, and stakeholder is essential because so a and money that is needed to regenerate cal scale. Success will depend as much on and small scale-entrepreneurs as it does on pers, or banks. The active engagement of last work for specific neighborhoods and e who stand to benefit. But neighborhood sive. A strong commitment from local /business will be needed to provide the using that lasts.

#### Public investments in neighborhoods

policy and capital investment priorities lease neighborhoods. Even mundane ng, curbs, sidewalks and street lighting generation. Larger investments in parks, sters, business districts and the like can but only if all of these are coordinated with ciptory budgeting and crowd-sourced. These strategic investments. But alignment ral investments with local plans is the key. h neighborhoods holistically where “complete hborhood retail are part of the mixed diverse, accessible, quality housing. For r repairing or restoring existing fabric. For lean reworking or repurposing dated and k, or creating town centers where none



# Communities Participating in the CEC and CSC programs as of April 2023



**2023**

**36** communities participating in NYSDERDA's CEC Program as of April 2023



**22** Clean Energy Communities (Completed at least 4 High Impact Actions)



**14** Other Participating Communities (Completed at least one High Impact Action)

**20** Communities participating in the CSC Program

- CSC Pledged (15)
- CSC Silver Certification (1)
- CSC Bronze Certification (4)



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**



**Climate Smart  
Communities**

# **Climate Smart Communities**

## **Overview & Funding Programs**

**April 27, 2023  
Dazzle Ekblad  
NYS DEC Office of Climate Change  
UBRI One Region Forward Learning Series**



**We all share the same atmosphere.**



# How does partnering across levels expand benefits?

Drop examples in chat!

**Larger Systems**  
(watershed, state,  
nation, atmosphere,  
etc.)

**Community (local)**

**Individual (personal)**



**Climate Smart  
Communities**



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**



## Climate Smart Communities

# State Support for Local Climate Action



Assistance to local government leaders to:

- Reduce greenhouse emissions
- Adapt to climate change

**Voluntary. No fees. Sponsored by 8 NYS state agencies (new: HCR!)**

**Comprehensive. Flexible. Collaborative.**

# Climate Smart Pledge Elements

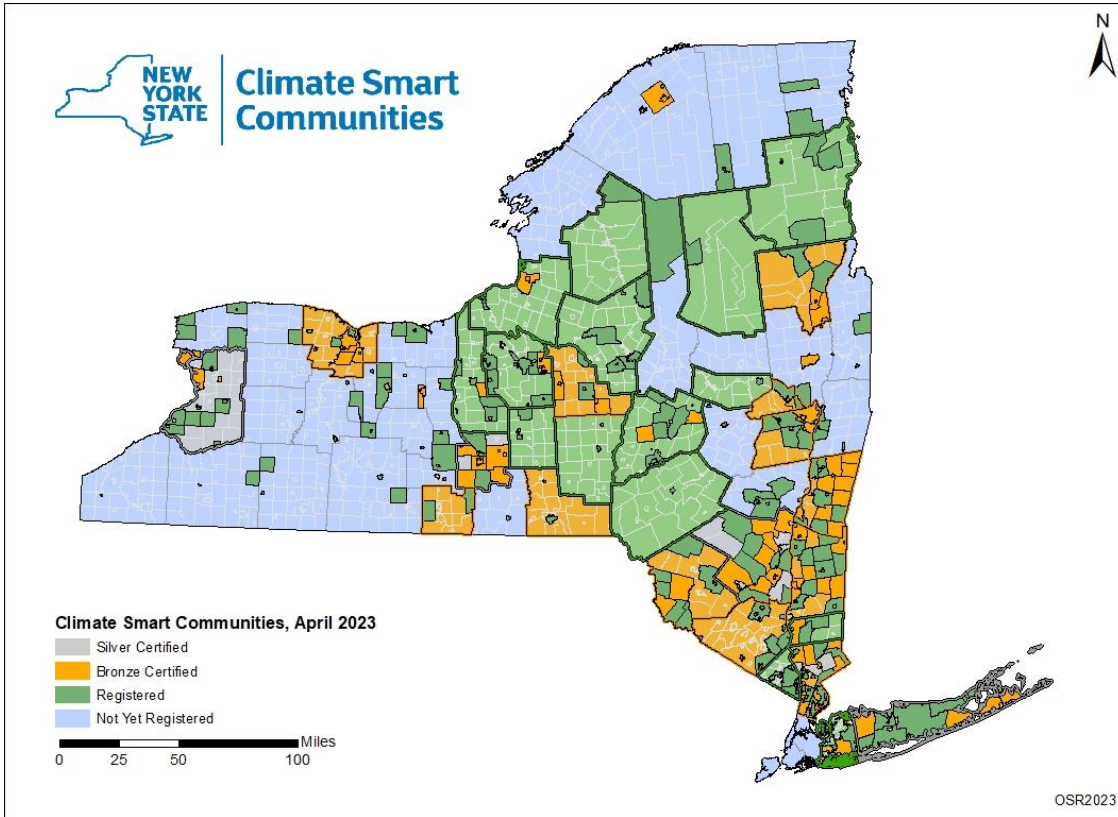


- 1) Build a Climate Smart Community
- 2) Inventory Emissions, Set Goals, & Plan for Climate Action
- 3) Decrease Energy Use
- 4) Shift to Clean, Renewable Energy
- 5) Use Climate-smart Materials Management
- 6) Implement Climate-Smart Land Use
- 7) Enhance Community Resilience to Climate Change
- 8) Support a Green Innovation Economy
- 9) Inform & Inspire the Public
- 10) Engage in an Evolving Process of Climate Action



<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>





## • 378 Registered

- Pledged to act on climate
- 9.4 million people since **2009**
- 49% of NYS population

## • 118 Certified

- Leaders who have documented progress
- 3,816 certification actions completed since **2014**

# CSC Certification Program

- Organized by the 10 pledge elements
- 120 points for the bronze level, 300 for silver
  - ~25 actions to get to bronze
- **Action types:**
  - Planning, outreach, policies, implementation
- [Action descriptions](#) offer detailed guidance for over 100 actions
  - Examples to follow & inspire you
- **Points for actions completed under Clean Energy Communities!**



# DEC CSC Funding Programs



Climate Smart  
Communities

## Municipal Zero-emission Vehicle (ZEV) Program

- Rebates for electric vehicles for municipal fleets
- Grants for ZEV charging/fueling stations

## CSC Grants

- Lead applicant must be a local gov't
- Competitive, 50/50 match (in-kind allowed)
- Covers both planning and implementation projects
- GHG mitigation and climate adaptation
- Expected to open in May. Apply via CFA by end of July.



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

# CSC Grants – Certification

**Award size:** \$10,000 to \$200,000

**Specific certification actions** for planning, inventories, and assessments related to:

- Reducing GHG Emissions - PE2 actions
  - [PE2 Action: Community Climate Action Plan](#)
- Municipal Fleet Mgmt - PE3 actions
- Materials Mgmt - PE5 actions
- Climate-smart Land Use - PE6 actions
- Adaptation - PE7 actions, such as:
  - [PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#)
  - [PE7 Action: Climate Adaptation Plan](#)





# CSC Grants - Implementation



**Award size:** \$50,000 to \$2,000,000

**Engineering/design max. of 15%**

Two subcategories:

**1) GHG Mitigation** – example project types from 2022 RFA:

- Reducing VMT (e.g., bike lanes)
- Anaerobic digestion at wastewater treatment plants
- Mgmt of refrigerants (fluorinated gases like HFCs)

**2) Adaptation** – example project types from 2022 RFA:

- Increasing natural resilience through floodplain restoration
- Flood-risk reduction (e.g., rightsizing bridges or culverts)



# CSC Coordinators are here to help!



## Climate Smart Communities

[About](#)
[Actions & Certification](#)
[Support](#)
[DASHBOARD](#)
[SIGN OUT](#)

### > About

### > Actions & Certification

### > Support

#### CSC Coordinators

CSC Scorecard

Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventories in NYS

Webinar Presentation Archive

### Find a Coordinator in Your Region

Climate Smart Communities Coordinators are available to provide free support services to municipalities across the 10 regions of New York State. Coordinators assist and support local governments in taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change through outreach, planning, education, and capacity building.



#### CAPITAL REGION

Tara Donadio

Capital District Regional Planning Commission

[Tara.Donadio@cdrpc.org](mailto:Tara.Donadio@cdrpc.org)

# Thank You!



Dazzle Ekblad

Office of Climate Change

NYS DEC, 625 Broadway

Albany NY 12233-1030

[climatesmart@dec.ny.gov](mailto:climatesmart@dec.ny.gov)

[cscgrants@dec.ny.gov](mailto:cscgrants@dec.ny.gov)

[ZEVrebate@dec.ny.gov](mailto:ZEVrebate@dec.ny.gov)

518-402-8448

## Useful climate-related sites:

[Regional GHG Inventories for NY \(2010\)](#)

[NY Climate Change Science Clearinghouse](#)

CLCPA: <https://climate.ny.gov/>

## Connect with DEC:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NYSDEC](http://www.facebook.com/NYSDEC)

Twitter: [twitter.com/NYSDEC](https://twitter.com/NYSDEC)

Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/nysdec](http://www.flickr.com/photos/nysdec)



# Climate Smart Communities Task Force Update

4.27.2023



# Task Force Objectives

The North Tonawanda Climate Smart Communities Task Force empowers our city to address the impacts of climate change through education, community building, and measurable actions.

The Task Force may create subcommittees as necessary to research opportunities or collaborate with other groups.



# Task Force Members

Deb Gondek, Chair

Erin Robinson, Vice Chair

Emily Root, Secretary

Jim Berry

Jack Kanack

Tim Pieper

Michael Tuzzo

Austin Tylec



## **ADVISORY:**

***Matthew Bourke, Sustainability and Resiliency Planner, University at Buffalo***

***Jason Kulaszewski, Clean Energy Coordinator, University at Buffalo***

# Deb Gondek

Retired from Rich Products  
in 2017

Director of Sustainability  
(2008 - 2017)

Director of Communication  
(1999 - 2007)

- LEED Accredited Professional  
(Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design)
- Founding member of WNY Sustainable Business  
Roundtable
- Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper Board of Directors
- MBA, Canisius College
- NT resident for 38 years

# Erin Robinson

Professor at  
Canisius College

Director of Environmental Studies  
Chair, Department of Sociology,  
Criminal Justice, and  
Environmental Studies

- Involved in research collaborations focused on community mobilization, engagement, and empowerment in connection to environmental justice concerns of water, air, and soil pollution
- Author of *“Community Mobilization for Environmental Problems: How a Grassroots Organization Forms and Works”*
- Ph.D. in Sociology, University at Buffalo
- Returned to NT in 2007



# Emily Root

Director of Ecological Programs  
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

(2012 - Present)

- Plans and implements habitat / waterfront restoration projects throughout WNY
- Serves on NT Waterfront Committee & Board of NT Botanical Gardens
- Masters Degree in Environmental Management
- NT resident for 4 years

# Jim Berry

Professor  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University at Buffalo  
(1988 - present)

- Teaching Innovation Award for new course development and community outreach (2019)
- Grant reviewer & panel member, National Science Foundation and USDA, peer reviewer for many science journals
- RENEW: UB faculty working together to further interdisciplinary work in areas of energy, environment, water & sustainability
- PH.D. in Genetics
- NT resident for 26 years

# Jack Kanack

President of Weather Medic  
since 2010

Vice President WNY Weather  
Society

- Thomas Jefferson Award (2013)  
as top US Weather Observer
- Environmental & Climate Change Videos  
[@weatherbuff](#)
- BS in Geoscience, SUNY Buffalo
- Lifelong NT Resident for 62 years

# Tim Pieper

Retired after 39 years Federal  
Service:

US Department of State  
(2001-2019)

US Global Change Research Program /  
Subcommittee for Climate Change  
(1994-2000)

US Government Reviewer on IPCC  
Reports (1999-2000)

NASA Earth Science Program (1989-1994)

- Serves on NT Financial  
Advisor Committee
- Masters Degree in  
Management
- Returned to NT in 2020

# Michael Tuzzo

Project Architect and  
Sustainability Director at  
Architectural Resources  
(2016 - present)

NT City Engineering Dept  
(2011-2015)

- Registered Architect (NYS)
- LEED Accredited Professional (BD+C)
- Co-Author of “*Climate Resilience Strategies for Buildings in NY State*”
- Master of Architecture and Master of Urban Planning, University at Buffalo
- NT resident for 31 years

# Austin Tylec

Mayor  
City of North Tonawanda

NT Alderman at Large (2018-2021)

CPL (Architecture & Engineering  
Firm)  
2015-2022

- Initiated the NT Climate Smart Task Force
- Architectural Designer, CPL
- Masters in Architecture, University at Buffalo
- NT Resident for 30 years

## ACHIEVEMENTS 2021 / 2022

- ✓ Task Force Established
- ✓ Bylaws approved by NT CC
- ✓ Identified, researched, and documented projects for CSC certification
- ✓ Implemented PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Program
- ✓ Achieved CSC Bronze Certification
- ✓ Developed Complete Streets Policy; approved by NT CC
- ✓ Drafted NT Solar Policy; submitted to NT Common Council
- ✓ Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- ✓ Continued progress with Community Choice Aggregate Program on renewable energy options for NT residents

## 2023 PRIORITIES

- ▶ Develop Climate Action Plan (input for NT's comprehensive plan)
- ▶ Source Water Protection Initiatives
- ▶ NT Recycling Strategy, Awareness & Education
- ▶ Renewable Energy / Solar
- ▶ Review zoning recommendations for High Energy Use Overlay District
- ▶ Outreach to NT residents via CSC Website, Social Media (Facebook), and Educational Sessions to raise community awareness of issues and solutions
- ▶ Participate in LWRP & Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

# CLIMATE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

## Vision for a Climate ResilieNT North Tonawanda

(December 2022)


- ▶ Partnering with UB = zero cost to NT for assessment (\$100 - 150K savings)
- ▶ First step in creating Vision for a Climate ResilieNT North Tonawanda
- ▶ Assessed:
  - Stormwater management (green & gray infrastructure, shoreline restoration)
  - Improving land use (zoning codes to address climate change)
  - Ecology: invasive species & remediating brownfields
  - Transportation
- ▶ Key Learnings → input to Climate Action Plan for North Tonawanda  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/168kB3KHVDeoRvNANf5Audk6hjreDDrR\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/168kB3KHVDeoRvNANf5Audk6hjreDDrR_/view)
- ▶ Next Steps: Kick-off meeting for Climate Action Plan development (March 7)



# Council Support Needed

- ▶ Council Representative to add to CSC task force as a member or key resource
- ▶ Recycling Recommendations / Raising Awareness
- ▶ Zoning: High Energy Use District Overlay
- ▶ Collaboration on Solar Policy
- ▶ Input from council, departments, and public on NT's Climate Action Plan





# **Erie County and Climate Smart Communities**

**Bonnie Lawrence - Deputy Commissioner  
Erie County Department of Environment & Planning**



Erie County  
**Climate Action &  
Sustainability Plan**  
Internal Operations



January 2019







Climate Smart Communities  
Certified Silver

Taking Local Action to Combat Climate Change

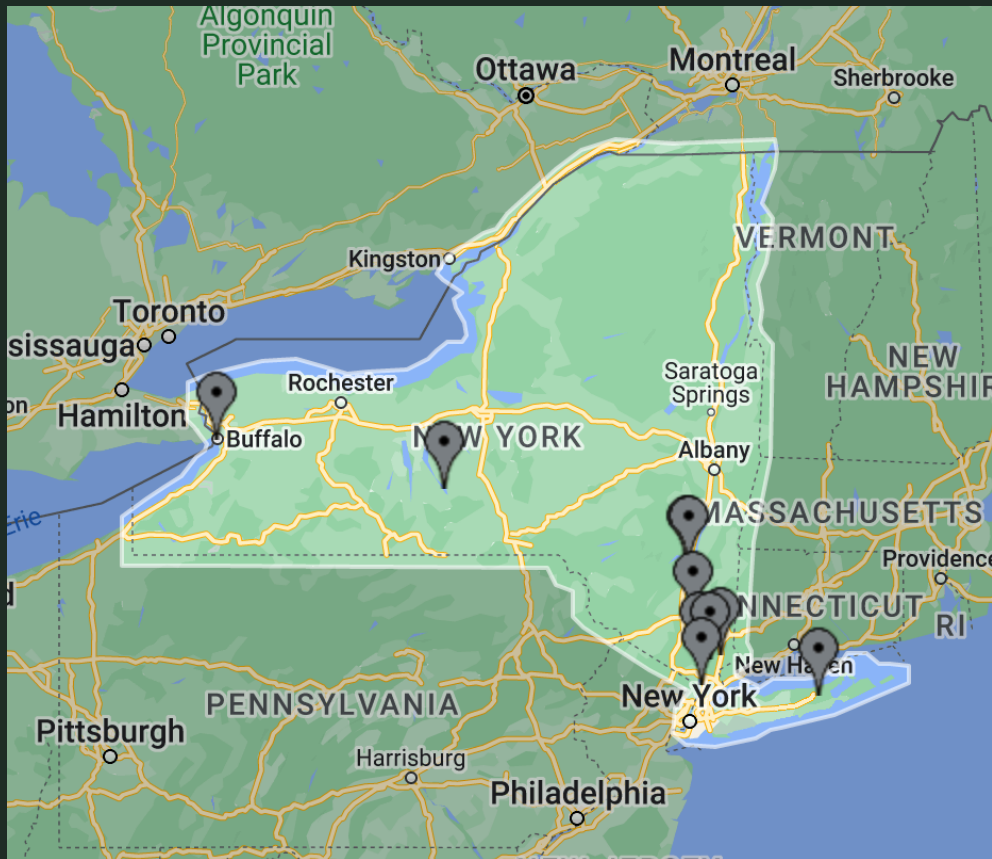
# Erie County

IS A

Silver Certified

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY

2021











and

# THANK YOU!

[bonnie.lawrence@erie.gov](mailto:bonnie.lawrence@erie.gov)

[sustainability@erie.gov](mailto:sustainability@erie.gov)

[www.erie.gov/sustainability](http://www.erie.gov/sustainability)

[www.erie.gov/climateaction](http://www.erie.gov/climateaction)





LESSONS FROM  
CLIMATE SMART  
COMMUNITIES

Q & A

# Thank you for joining us this morning!



- Follow-up material will be posted on [www.oneregionforward.org](http://www.oneregionforward.org) in the coming weeks
- Sign-up for **email updates** to hear about **future webinars and learning sessions**
- AICP members seeking to log CM credits should use the event number **9268299**
- For questions about CM credits or to request a training certificate, please contact Matt Bourke ([mjbourke@buffalo.edu](mailto:mjbourke@buffalo.edu))