

Town of Clinton Climate Smart Planning

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Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool is a checklist to identify gaps in a community's planning process.

The Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool was used to evaluate opportunities for the Town of Clinton to improve its community's resilience to flooding and climate change. The Planning Tool reviews many long- and short- term aspects of storm and climate change preparedness by reviewing Town and County planning documents, activities and management. Documents were reviewed, and municipal staff members were consulted in the process of completing the assessment. The assessment and recommendations will be shared through discussions at Town Board meetings.

Municipal staff engaged in the Town of Clinton Climate Smart Planning assessment:

Mike Whitton, Town Supervisor
Michael, Cosenza, Building Inspector
Jeff Newman, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Barbara Mansell, CAC Chair
Joe Phelan, CAC member, CSC Task Force Chair

The completed assessment and recommendations highlight areas of opportunity for the Town of Clinton to integrate climate change preparedness into its municipal operations and planning.

Areas of Strength

- The Town has an active Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)
- The CAC welcomes new homeowners in the municipality with a Welcome Folder containing information about the Town and local conservation efforts
- The Town has a Disaster Plan (Town of Clinton Disaster Plan)
- The Town currently has a webpage on the Town site dedicated to the Climate Smart Communities program and climate education **CSC PE9 Action: Local Climate Action Website (3 pts.)**
- The Town is a registered Climate Smart Community and has an active task force.

The Town is in the process of creating a Climate Action Plan **CSC PE2 Action: Government Operations Climate Action Plan (12-16pts)**

Areas of Opportunity

- As a registered Climate Smart Community the Town can leverage completion of this Climate Smart Resiliency Planning Tool for points toward Climate Smart Communities certification. **CSC PE7 Action: Climate Smart Resiliency Planning (6 pts.)**. For more information on the Climate Smart Communities Certification Program, visit the Climate Smart Communities portal: <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>
- The Comprehensive Plan was published in 2012 and could be updated to incorporate climate resiliency and emergency management planning. Comprehensive plans should be reviewed every 10 years. **CSC PE6 Action: Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements (3-21 pts)**
- The Town has an active website and resident email list that can be utilized to share more information

Recommendations

The following opportunities emerged under each of the sections of the Climate Smart Planning assessment:

Section 2- Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

- Consider training and developing staff capacity for using vulnerability assessment (like FEMA's HAZUS-MH) and risk-mapping tools (like flood insurance rate maps and cumulative risk assessments)¹. If it is beyond the Town's capacity, look to Dutchess County staff who have the capacity to use these resources.
- The next time the Hazard Mitigation Plan is updated, consider the following (**CSC PE7 Action: Hazard Mitigation Plan 4 Points**) *Since the County guides the Hazard Mitigation process, they may be able to assist with Hazard Mitigation Planning updates:*
 - Prioritizing the magnitude of consequence for potential risks, e.g., disruption of internal operations, capital and operating costs, number of people affected, public health, economy, and environment.
 - Identifying conditions that could amplify the effect of a hazard, e.g. erosion of stabilized shorelines

¹ Cumulative risk assessment is a tool to assist communities in understanding the aggregation of risks from multiple environmental stressors. <https://www.epa.gov/risk/framework-cumulative-risk-assessment>

- Expanding beyond mitigation strategies to include climate adaptation strategies: Since the County guides the Hazard Mitigation process, they may be able to assist with this section.
 - Identify and categorize them by type, administration, condition, timing and geography
 - Evaluate and prioritize adaptation strategies using metrics, such as strategy cost, feasibility, timing of implementation, efficacy and co-benefits
- Updating pre-existing maps to show populations (especially vulnerable populations), building stock, and natural and cultural resources in relation to identified hazards.
- Describing the damage and cost of previous coastal storms, floods, or erosion, and estimating future financial losses that may result from climate change
- Making sure the plan is directly shared with municipal planners, public works officials, transportation planners, and other appropriate municipal, county or state officials

Section 3- Public Outreach and Engagement

*Any of the information below can also be shared on the Town's social media pages, brochures, etc. for CSC points. **CSC PE9 Action: Social Media (3 pts.)***

- Involve the public in the identification of historic storm effects, such as storm-surge elevations, flood-prone streets, or property loss through participatory mapping, public surveys, and stakeholder meetings. In one of the stakeholder meetings, allow the public to identify an overall acceptable level of natural-hazard risk. This could potentially be carried out and included in the next update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Create a webpage on the Town's website that is dedicated to storm/emergency preparedness and flood mitigation **CSC PE9 Action: Local Climate Action Website (3 pts.)**. Consider making this webpage available in Spanish and English, with culturally sensitive approaches. On this webpage:
 - Publicize the availability of floodplain information to property owners, businesses, insurance agents, real estate agents, and lenders²
 - Add a link directing residents and businesses to the Dutchess County DER's webpage on storm-preparedness³
 - Add a link directing residents to the Dutchess County DER's webpages that provides information on what to include in an at-home emergency kit⁴, emergency supplies, and evacuation kit (FEMA's Ready.gov checklist).

² <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>

³ <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/QuickLinks/17006.htm>

⁴ <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Emergency-Response/Family-Emergency-Plan-and-Supplies.htm>

- Provide residents with guidance on the development of personal or family evacuation plans⁵
- Provide residents with information on expected inundation areas, evacuation routes, and evacuation bus pick-up locations, location of severe weather shelters and pet shelters prior to the threat of a storm
- Share the link from the Dutchess County DER's webpages⁶ to the ASPCA's disaster preparedness steps for domesticated animals
- Include a link to FEMA's "Are You Ready: An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness"⁷
- Share FEMA suggested means⁸ to protect homes against storm and wind damage with property owners in the community
- Refer home builders to FEMA's coastal construction manual⁹
- Share information on the NY-Alert program¹⁰ and how residents can sign up
- Provide property owners with guidelines to retrofit existing development for flood and wind risks¹¹
- include information on the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains, wetlands and green infrastructure, and information on flood mitigation
- Share information on the new Ready Dutchess app¹² as well as the new vulnerable populations sign up¹³
- A Facebook page exists for the town but is not updated frequently. Consider utilizing social media to publicize climate action within the town, provide emergency preparedness information for residents, and post weather alerts **CSC PE9 Action: Social Media (3 pts.)**
- Incorporate climate education into public events such as the Clinton Community Day **CSC PE9 Action: Climate Related Public Events (3 pts.)**
- Expand the Welcome Folder to include floodplain information and information emergency preparedness and climate action

Section 4- Integration of Municipal Plans

- The next time the Open Space Inventory and Conservation Plan is updated, consider identifying floodplain management as a priority, updating the plan in coordination with the state open space plan, and including the community in updating process

⁵ <https://www.ready.gov/evacuation>

⁶ <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Emergency-Response/Pet-Planning.htm>

⁷ https://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/areyouready_full.pdf

⁸ <https://www.ready.gov/severe-weather>

⁹ <https://www.fema.gov/home-builders-guide-coastal-construction-technical-fact-sheet-series-fema-p-499>

¹⁰ <https://alert.ny.gov/>

¹¹ <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/480>

¹² <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/County-Executive/New-Tools-Help-Residents-Prepare-for-Emergencies.htm>

¹³ <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Needs-Registry-Form/Registry-For-Individuals.aspx>

- The next time the Hazard Mitigation Plan is updated, consider working with Dutchess County to execute the following:
 - Including a certified floodplain manager in the planning process
 - Including cost and effectiveness details for past mitigation efforts
 - Providing a general explanation of the environmental, social and economic consequences of failing to address natural hazards
 - Consider updating the hazard map to include storm surge and erosion rates including inland riverine erosion as a hazard
 - Addressing transportation and other needs of particularly vulnerable populations, such as homeless, low income, elderly, special needs and disabled
 - Specifying timelines for completing projects and achieving goals
 - Corresponding mitigation goals with measurable mitigation objectives
 - Including a process for intergovernmental coordination for mitigating natural hazards
 - Consulting with neighboring governments to coordinate disaster responses and hazard mitigation strategies
 - Identifying opportunities to incorporate hazard mitigation into existing planning mechanisms, (e.g., land-use planning, capital investments, shoreline restoration projects)

Section 5- Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

- Consider becoming a Storm Ready Community¹⁴
- Design and implement a general emergency warning system. Utilize the town updates to inform residents of impending emergency or severe weather situations
- Schedule and advertise county led Citizen Preparedness Training¹⁵.
- Advertise the new Dutchess County Voluntary Access and Functional Needs Registry to residents who may need additional assistance during emergencies
- Invest in a portable communications system that can operate under poor weather conditions and when electrical power is not available
- Consider going beyond social media to implement a comprehensive heat-warning system and improving the cooling-center program so it considers potential problems such as transportation obstacles, effects of power outages or flooding, and other needs of vulnerable populations/communities. **PE7 Action: Heat Emergency Plan (6 pts) and PE7 Action: Cooling Centers (1-9pts)**¹⁶
- Consider creating an Evacuation Plan:

¹⁴ <https://www.weather.gov/stormready/become>

¹⁵ <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Emergency-Response/Citizen-Preparedness-Training.htm>

¹⁶ <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/#open/action/91>

- Clearly define responsibilities for municipal evacuation
- Identify many different evacuation routes, where those routes are prone to flooding, including time frames for evacuations, and considering the possibility of evacuation of neighboring jurisdictions occurring concurrently
- Identify and provide for groups that rely on public transportation (or lack private vehicles) for emergency evacuations
- Identifying conditions that would initiate a traffic lane reversal
- Identify local and state evacuation assistance programs for hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, residents without personal transportation, elderly, disabled, and schools
- Encourage agricultural and other landowners to implement pre-disaster mitigation measures such as storing hay bales and equipment in places less-likely to get flooded, installing green infrastructure to capture storm water and tolerate inundation, and using land management practices to improve water retention in soil

Section 6- Hazard Mitigation Implementation

- Continue pursuing Climate Smart Communities Certification¹⁷.
- Continue pursuing development of a Climate Action Plan **CSC PE2 Action Government Operations Climate Action Plan (12-16 pts.)**
- Expand the grants that the municipality takes advantage of to include federal funding for hazard mitigation programs (FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, FEMA Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program, and FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Program)
- Consider engaging in wetland restoration and creating riparian buffers. This could be paid through grant money or a state program

Potential Funding Sources

This section will list any applicable local, state, and federal funding available.

- DEC Climate Smart Communities Grant Program: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/109181.html>
- DEC Grant Applications: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/grants.html>
- DEC Hudson River Estuary Program Grants: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html>
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: <https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-grant-program>
- FEMA Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program: <https://www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program>

¹⁷ <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>

- FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program: <https://www.fema.gov/flood-mitigation-assistance-grant-program>
- HUD Community Development Block Grants: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs
- NYS Department of State Grants (including Local Waterfront Revitalization Program): <https://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/>