



Introduction and Background

The Cleaner, Greener Communities Program was announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in his 2011 State of the State address. The Program empowers regions to create more sustainable - communities by funding smart development practices. Planning teams are partnering with public and private experts across a wide range of fields, along with community residents, to lead the development of regional sustainability plans and to implement the projects that will significantly improve the economic and environmental health of their areas. This effort will guide integrated, sustainable solution -- from statewide investments to regional decision-making on land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, energy, and environmental practices -- to improve our quality of life.



Public Outreach Meetings

The Capital Region planning area is comprised of eight counties: Albany; Columbia; Greene; Rensselaer; Saratoga; Schenectady; Warren; and Washington.

Three public forums were held in July 2012 across the region to get feedback on draft goals and strategies and to place ideas on maps representing their communities. More than 150 people participated, helped to identify more than 300 existing and proposed projects on county and town maps in the region.

Eight focus areas were identified and draft goals were created by project technical committees to help guide the project:

- climate adaptation
- energy
- transportation
- economic development
- solid waste
- land use/livable communities
- food systems
- water

Working in teams, participants at the workshops provided important feedback on proposed goals, including suggestions to improve them and also crafting 75 new potential goals. Over 300 strategies were also developed across the eight focus areas to move the region to a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Two dozen residents of the Capital Region's southern counties participated in a public forum in Coxsackie on July 23. One hundred residents of the Capital Region's central counties participated in a public forum in Rensselaer on July 24 and another two dozen residents of the Capital Region's northern counties participated in a public forum in Queensbury on July 25. Many contributed ideas for best practices and suggestions for improving sustainability in the Capital Region.

Participants were also encouraged to add other ideas. The responses included the need to work together across the region to be successful and a number of recommendations to improve education and build capacity for change.



Top Strategies Identified at the Workshops

- Build capacity for agencies, governments, institutions, and individuals to adapt to a



changing climate.

- Promote HOV, ride shares and public transit.
- Transit-oriented design, affordable public transit and improved bike and trail networks.
- Promote Buy Local Food and Buy Local Forest Products to support agricultural and forested land use.
- Give funds to local co-ops that involve the community and local food. Coordinate purchase of local food for multiple school districts and create distribution systems from farms to inner cities
- Reduce sprawl, create vibrant centers to reduce development pressure on rural areas



We want your ideas!

We welcome your input! This effort is based on input from community members across the eight-county region. In fact, some of the best ideas are already being discussed and planned in local communities, and community input throughout this process will shape the final Capital Region Sustainability Plan.

During the workshops, teams were asked to contribute their ideas on a giant paper matrix. These ideas were transcribed in real-time into an online platform called Crowdbrite. A separate matrix was created for each of the first round of public workshops. To get things started, the technical committees identified nearly 50 potential goals for public feedback, to which community members added another 75 potential goals during the public workshops. There was strong support for the existing goals and more than 40 suggestions for improving them. A key focus of the workshops was identifying new strategies that would help to implement the goals. A total of 266 strategies were identified across all eight of the focus areas. Participants were also asked to identify best practices and examples that others can learn from; more than 20 were identified during the workshops.

We encourage you to visit the website (<http://sustainablecapitalregion.org>) to share ideas through the "online open house" until August 31. You will be able to use virtual sticky notes to add new ideas and comment on ideas that others contributed. The technical committees will consider all of the input as they refine the goals and strategies and develop a draft Capital Region Sustainability Plan. A second round of public forums is being scheduled this fall to provide an opportunity for public input on that draft plan.

