



Climate Smart Communities

Achieving Bronze Certification

Background of Lewis County's Participation

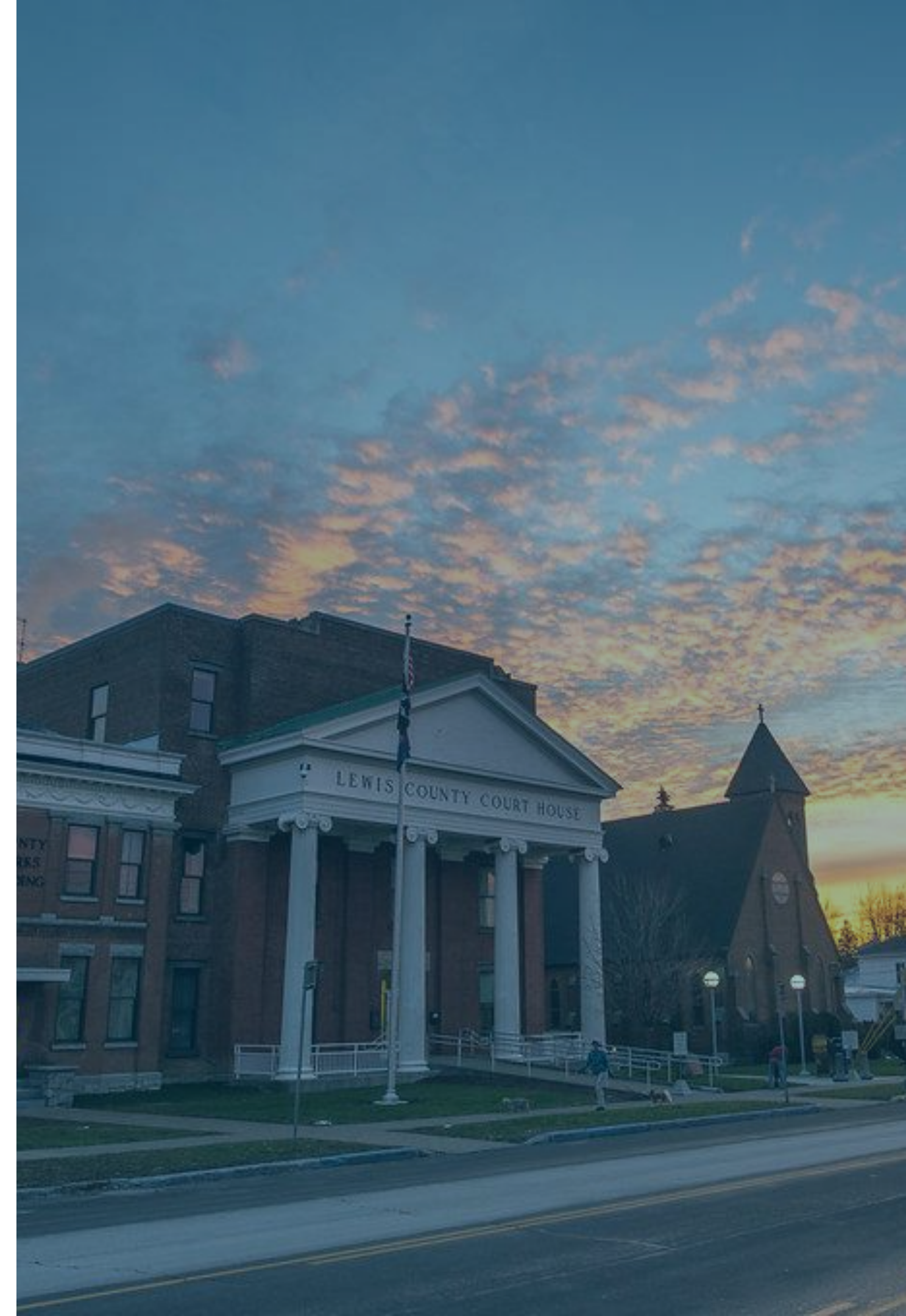
“Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. **The program offers grants, rebates for electric vehicles, and free technical assistance.**”

What's in it for us?

- Points on NYS grant applications on a variety of different grant programs.
- Cost savings through greater efficiency

How did we start?

- Adopting a Climate Smart Communities pledge
- Identifying mandatory actions



Certification Process

01

Pledge

02

Plan

03

Implement
& Document

04

Apply

Certification Levels

Registered CSC - 416

Bronze - 127

Silver - 13

Gold (In Development)



Climate Smart
Communities
Certified Bronze

Taking Local Action to Combat Climate Change

Lewis County

IS A

Bronze Certified

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY

2023



Learning Curve

Program Details

- 10 Pledge Elements with **100+ Action Items**
- Point System
 - 2 of 2 Mandatory actions
 - CSC Coordinator (10 pts)
 - CSC Task Force (20 pts)
 - 3-6 of 13 Priority actions
 - Government Op GHG Inventory
 - Community Complete Streets Policy
 - Government Building Energy Audits
 - **Points can be awarded for actions completed prior to the CSC pledge.**

Application Process

- 3 opportunities to apply each year (Jan, April, July)
- Municipal Dashboard
- Certification valid for 5 years after designation date.

Pledge Elements & Corresponding Actions

Pledge Element 1:

Build a climate-smart community.

Building a local team to foster positive change by designating a point person and creating a CSC task force with community members. Connect to larger networks by joining a regional or national climate campaign focused on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or enhancing sustainability.

10

CSC Coordinator

To support steady progress on local climate mitigation and adaptation, it is helpful to have a coordinator to serve as a point of contact for the program and facilitate project implementation.

3

National/Regional Climate Program

Local governments may choose to be involved in other climate programs that offer access to a broader network or a different set of resources. Lewis County is part of NYSERDA's Clean Energy Community Program.

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CSC Task Force

Success at the local level relies on a team of local officials, professionals, and stakeholders that are knowledgeable about the local decision-making process, and can promote and support the plans, policies, and programs that are part of the (CSC) Certification program. Dubbed 'Sustainably Lewis'



CSC Task Force Members

Sustainably Lewis

Lauryn Tabolt

CSC Coordinator | Community Development Specialist
Lewis County Planning & Community Development

Tim Hunt

Superintendent
Lewis County Highway Department

Matt O'Connor

Supervisor
Lewis County Buildings & Grounds

Nichelle Swisher

District Manager
Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

Kaylee Tabolt

Economic & Tourism Development Specialist
Naturally Lewis, Inc.

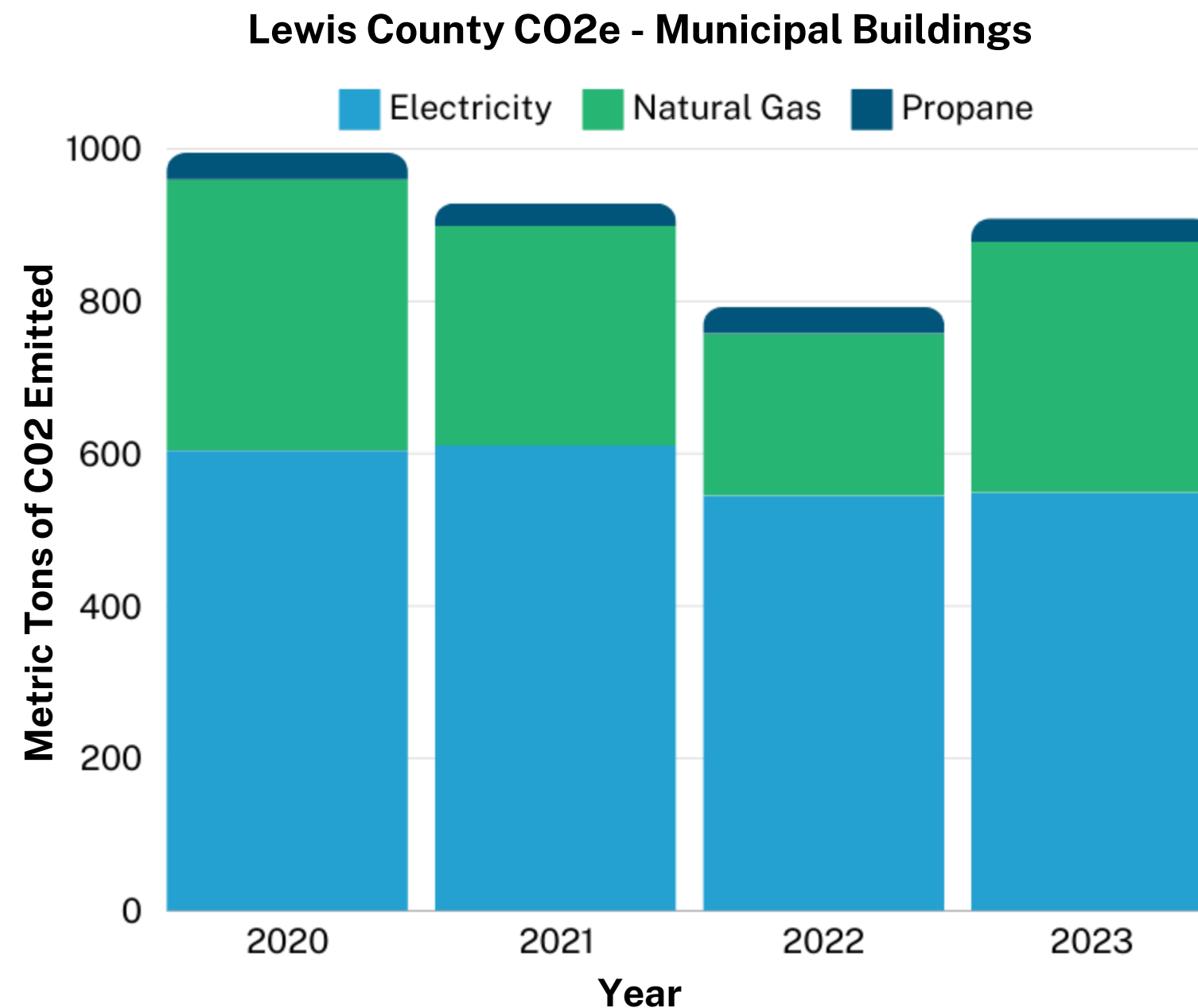
Ashley Waite

Director
Lewis County Public Health

Pledge Element 2:

Inventory emissions, set goals, and plan for climate action.

Gather data about local GHG emission sources. Develop baseline emissions inventories for government operations and the community. Develop a local action plan for reducing emissions that includes specific GHG reduction targets and strategies to achieve those targets.



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Government Operations GHG Inventory

Lewis County partnered with SUNY ESF and the Tug Hill Commission to create an inventory and determine a baseline in 2019. The report looks at Lewis County's solar development, building energy usage, and transportation energy usage. This inventory provides us with the data needed to set realistic goals and track progress.



Pledge Element 3:

Decrease energy use.

Lead by example. Reduce emissions and save taxpayer dollars by reducing energy demand in public facilities, infrastructure, and vehicle fleets, and maximizing energy efficiency across municipal operations.

5

5

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Interior Lighting Upgrades

Upgrading to more efficient lighting saves money and reduces indirect GHG emissions associated with electricity consumption. We replaced LED lighting in the Courthouse, DSS building, and Public Safety Building, which covers 47% of County building square footage.

Energy Code Enforcement Training

The Energy Code is a minimum building standard for energy efficiency, applicable to new construction and renovation of commercial and residential buildings in New York State. A Code Enforcement officer attended a training on this.

Fleet Inventory

By creating a fleet inventory and updating it on a regular basis, local governments can identify, for example, which vehicles are the least fuel-efficient and develop a plan to replace them with vehicles that serve the same function but are more efficient.

Incentives for Employee Carpool & Transit

Local governments can encourage sustainable transportation. Lewis County Public Transportation Vanpool program offers a 50% subsidy for users of the program.

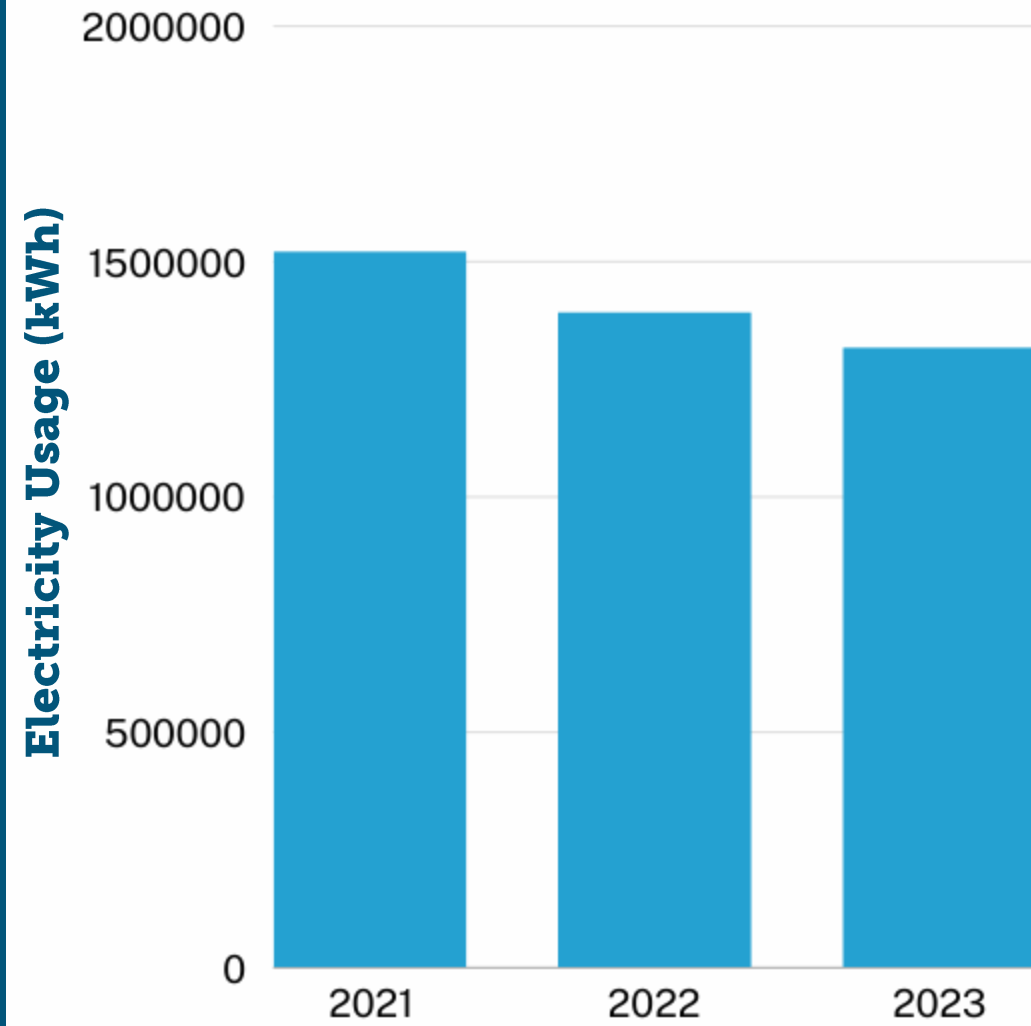
Benchmarking - Municipal Buildings

Building energy benchmarking involves tracking energy use, measuring performance over time. We track this using Energy Star's Portfolio Manager

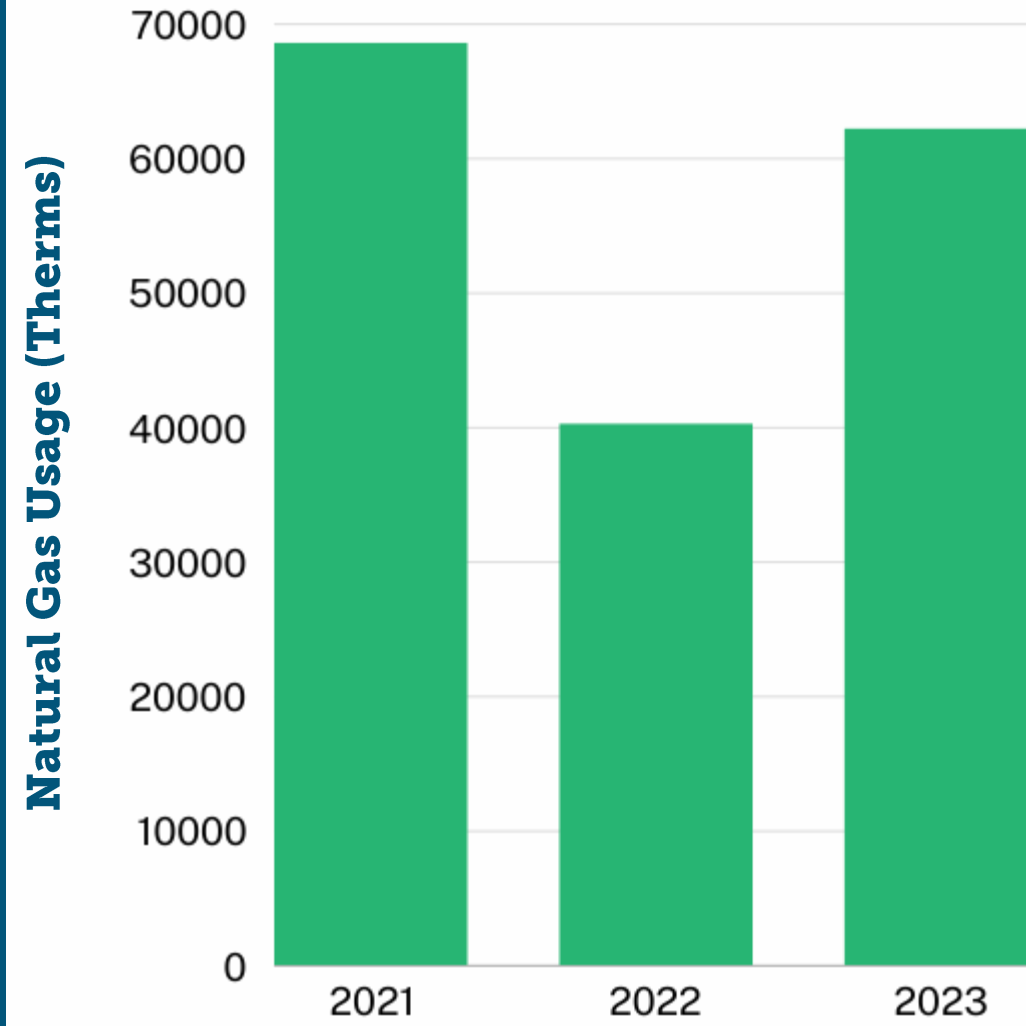


Benchmarking - Municipal Buildings

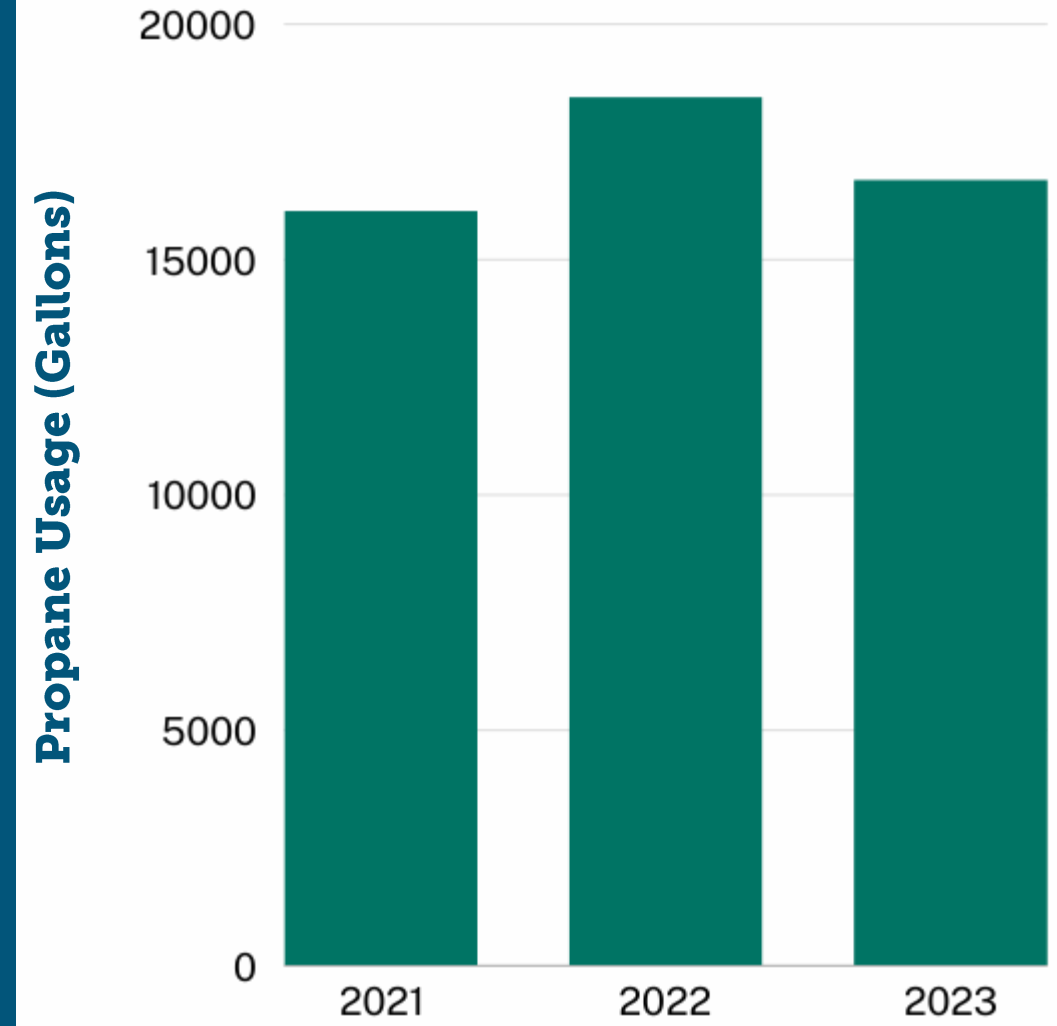
Electricity Usage 2021-2023



Natural Gas Usage 2021-2023



Propane Usage 2021-2023



Pledge Element 4:

Shift to clean, renewable energy.

Adopt a policy to power government operations with clean energy. Conduct studies to examine the feasibility of renewable energy installations on public property. Implement renewable energy projects such as solar, wind, geothermal, or small hydro.



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Solar Energy Installation

Lewis County has a 2.5 MW solar development located behind the County's Public Safety Building. This development spans 19 acres and includes 8,500 PV panels. There were 358,120 kWh generated in May 2024.



Pledge Element 5:

Use climate-smart materials management.

Reduce the volume of solid waste and increase recycling in government operations. Encourage and support waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting of materials. Educate the community and offer recycling and composting programs, and waste-diversion opportunities that focus on reducing and reusing materials.



3

Recycling Bins in Government Buildings

People are more likely to recycle when it is easy and convenient. Each employee desk has a trash & recycling can located next to them. We were able to submit documentation for the new DSS building and the recycling bins purchased for it.



Pledge Element 6:

Implement climate-smart land use.

Minimize the GHG impact of new development through smart-growth strategies. Adopt community plans, land-use policies, building codes, and multi-modal transportation actions to limit sprawl, reduce vehicle miles traveled, support local agriculture, and protect open lands, wetlands, and forests.

5

Unified Solar Permit

A standardized permit application designed to streamline the approval process for installing solar in the community. The standardized permit is expected to cut costs by creating a uniform permitting process in municipalities across New York State.

8

Access to Public Transit

By increasing public transit ridership, a community can maximize the benefits of public transportation, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions from single-occupancy vehicles, lower gasoline consumption, reduced congestion, enhancement of personal mobility (especially for those without a vehicle), and additional benefits to jobs and the economy. Lewis County's Public Transportation (LCPT) system provides residents with low-cost, reliable, and sustainable transportation options.

4

Complete Streets Policy

A Complete Streets approach to designing our roads incorporates safety, livability, and a place for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit riders. Lewis County adopted a Complete Streets Policy on 7/5/2023 and is in the process of completing a Complete Streets Plan with shovel-ready projects municipalities can budget for and implement later on.



Complete Streets Policy



LEWIS COUNTY COMPLETE STREETS PLAN

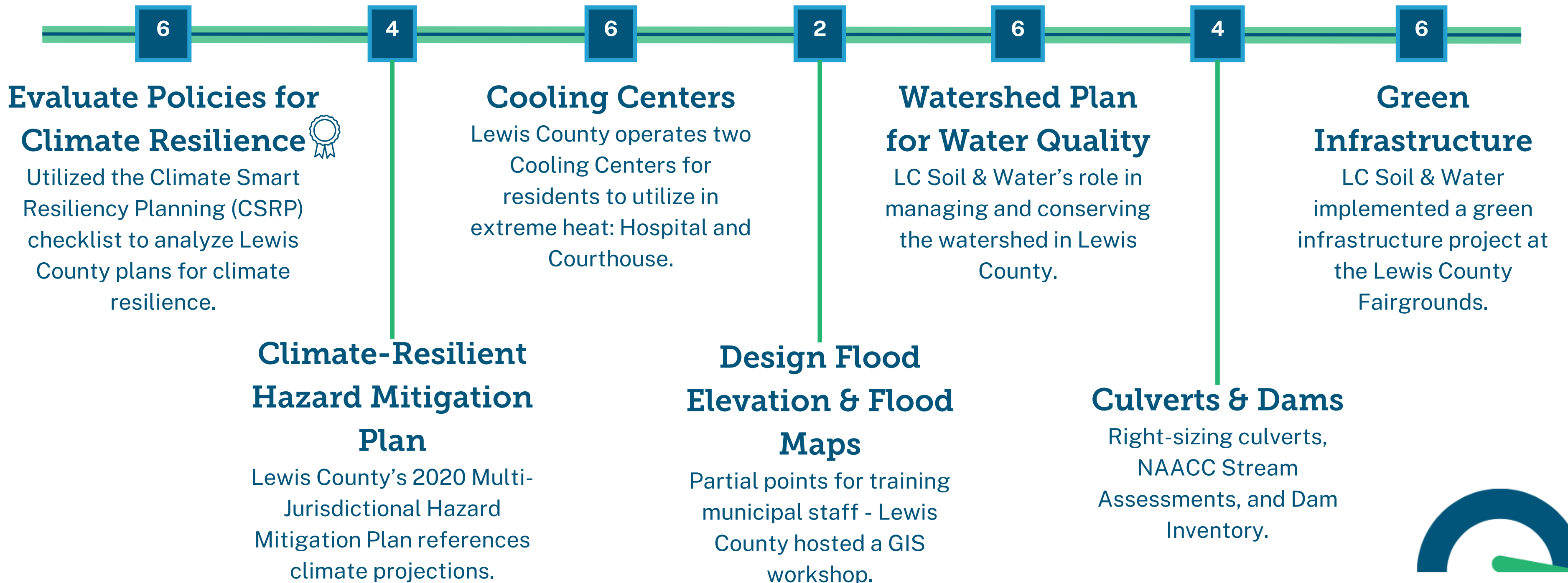
DRAFT: October 2023



Pledge Element 7:

Enhance community resilience to climate change.

Establish a climate resiliency vision and associated goals, identify vulnerabilities to climate change effects for both government operations and the community, and develop and implement strategies to address those vulnerabilities and increase overall community resilience.





Before

e



After 

Pledge Element 8:

Support a green innovation economy.

Lead and support the transition to a green economy by incorporating climate action and sustainability into economic development plans. Promote local green industries and offer incentives for supporting them. Adopt policies that support residents and businesses in being energy-efficient. Invest in green jobs training, farmers' markets, and brownfield redevelopment.

3

Farmers' Market

Support of local food production is an important piece of building a local green economy. Lewis County Health System operates a Farmers' Market June-October on Thursdays from 11 AM-3 PM.

5

Brownfield Clean-up & Redevelopment

Cleaning up and redeveloping brownfield sites avoids the environmental impacts associated with developing on greenfield sites and puts an environmentally damaged site back into productive use. Lewis County partnered with the Village of Lyons Falls to develop a brownfield redevelopment plan, which is currently used for a green business.

7

PACE Financing

Lewis County adopted Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing, which allows commercial or non-profit property owners to pay back the cost of clean energy upgrades to their property over a period of time.

2

Buy Local/Buy Green Campaign

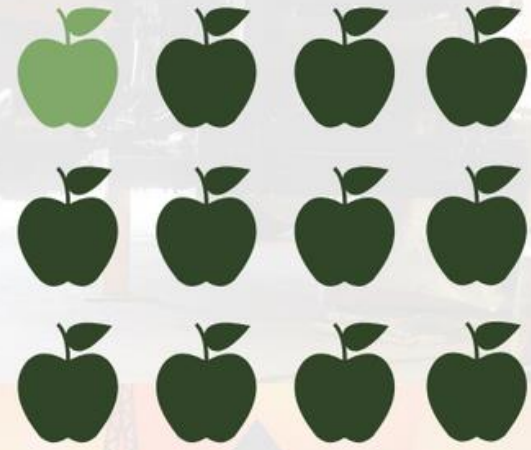
When local governments take the lead in creating a brand for local products and in developing an education campaign, it raises awareness of local, green purchasing in the community. Naturally Lewis' Shop, Eat, Enjoy Local Campaign & Cuisine Trail.



WHY SHOP LOCAL?



THE OWNERS OF
Local Businesses
EMPLOY LOCAL PEOPLE.



LOCAL BUSINESSES STOCK
Local Products
AND BUY LOCAL SERVICES.



Shop. Eat. Enjoy.

LOCAL
LEWIS COUNTY



LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORT LOCAL
EVENTS, SPORTS TEAMS & CHARITIES

250%

more than big corporations.



\$\$\$\$\$

BUYING LOCAL KEEPS

4 times

THE MONEY IN

THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO SHOPPING AT CHAINS.



NATURALLY
LEWIS
LEWIS COUNTY, NY



Pledge Element 9:

Inform and inspire the public.

Host events and organize campaigns to educate citizens about climate change and help them discover their role in building a low-emission community that is attractive, healthy, and equitable. Create websites, and use social media outlets to publicize the local government's commitment to reducing GHG emissions and adapting to a changing climate.

3

Climate-related Public Events

Local governments cannot achieve energy and climate goals without the participation of an informed populace. We have received points for LC Soil & Water teaching students about water conservation, the annual Trash Bash, and being a part of the Black River Watershed Conference.

3

Social Media


Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tumblr are used to connect audiences of all demographics, and to inform and engage the public on events as they are happening. Posting sustainability tips on County supported Facebook pages helped us get points for this action.

3

Local Climate Action Website

Maintaining a website about the local government's climate initiatives is a convenient and low-cost way to deliver information to community members. On the Sustainably Lewis page on our website we include sustainability tips as well as climate projections.

Projected Climate Change Impacts in NYS



Hotter Summers &
Colder Winters

This panel features a background image of a snowy landscape with a road and trees under a blue sky.

[Learn More →](#)



Changing
Precipitation
Patterns

This panel features a background image of a dark, stormy sky with rain falling over a body of water.


[Learn More →](#)



Extreme & Intense
Storms

This panel features a background image of a snowy winter scene with a wooden fence and trees.


[Learn More →](#)



Human Health
Concerns

This panel features a background image of a sunlit path through a forest with trees and a person walking.


[Learn More →](#)



Water Quality
Impacts

This panel features a background image of a calm lake or river with a blue sky and green trees.

[Learn More →](#)



Unpredictable Crop
Yields

This panel features a background image of a green agricultural field with rows of crops.

[Learn More →](#)

Mitigating the Projections

NYS Climate Smart Communities

Pledge Element 10:

Engage in an evolving process of climate action.

Monitor and report on progress toward achieving goals. Engage with community members on an ongoing basis as part of considering new ideas and modifying strategies as opportunities emerge and technologies evolve. Update strategies and plans. Share success stories and cooperate with neighboring communities.

5

GHG Tracking System

A GHG tracking system enables local governments to evaluate the benefits of programs and compare emissions from one year to the next and against their GHG targets.

4

Annual Progress Report

A regular reporting process helps to highlight progress and provides the opportunity to inform and engage the public and key stakeholders, while also identifying problems and opportunities to adapt existing approaches

4

Updates to Strategies & Plans

As circumstances change and new opportunities or challenges arise, local governments must review and update climate action strategies and the associated planning documents.

Future Goals & Plans

Lewis County will apply for recertification in 2028, as is required every 5 years. Some future projects and initiatives we hope to put into place for the next submission are:

- PE 3 HVAC Upgrades**
Up to 5 Points
- PE 3 Government Building Energy Audits**
Up to 16 Points
- PE 5 Compost Bins for Residents**
Up to 2 Points
- PE 5 Residential Organic Waste Program**
Up to 22 Points

- PE 6 Smart Growth Policies**
Up to 10 Points
- PE 6 Traffic Calming**
Up to 7 Points
- PE 6 Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements**
Up to 21 Points

Advice

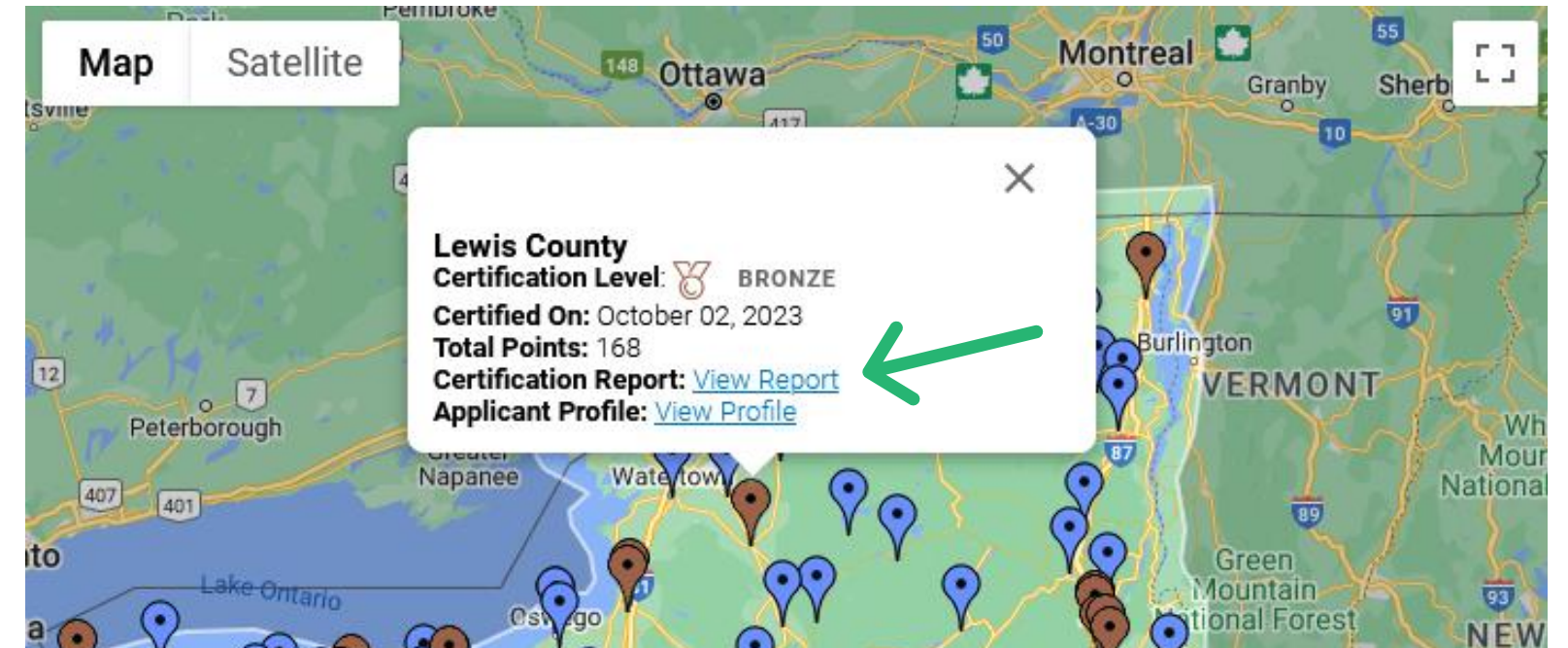
Utilize Existing Certification Reports

Access the submissions and attachments for each certified municipality via the CSC map. To do this, click on the desired community and then select "View Report." This resource can help you understand how other communities have completed their actions.

Find the CSC Coordinator in Your Region

Coordinators are available to provide free technical assistance to communities across all 10 regions of NYS. Coordinators facilitate local action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change through outreach, planning, education, and capacity building.

North Country - Carlie Leary, Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA)



Thank you!

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