



# Building economic prosperity through energy innovation

## Case Study

Location:

Ithaca  
(Tompkins County)

High Impact Actions Taken:

- Solarize
- Clean Fleets
- Energize NY Finance
- LED Street Lights

## Background

The city of Ithaca—home to approximately 30,000 people, several colleges and universities, a bustling downtown, and more than 150 captivating waterfalls—is breaking new ground by linking energy efficiency to economic development. The city is going through an economic transformation, which is evident when walking through town and in the many construction projects throughout the city.

## Financing the Future

Out of Ithaca's ambitious economic development and energy efficiency goals came a plan to monitor energy use and improve the environmental impact of the city's municipal buildings through benchmarking. The city is participating in the Energize NY Finance Program, which focuses on providing guidance and resources to commercial and nonprofit business owners to reduce their operating costs and increase the value of their buildings through clean energy improvements. Implementing this program provides the financial, economic, and environmental incentives for development and encourages growth within the city.

Ithaca is combining its resources to create a community that businesses can thrive in, while reducing costs and carbon emissions. This is evident in Purity Ice Cream, a popular ice cream and food shop. After renovations, the owners are heating and cooling the store with high-efficiency ground source heat pumps and solar energy, dramatically reducing Purity's greenhouse gas emissions while keeping customers and employees comfortable.

As Ithaca continues its Energize NY Financing three-year pilot program, it will provide energy efficiency assistance to existing and new businesses.



**“We want to show other communities that they can do it too and see great benefits.”**

*— Nick Goldsmith, Sustainability Coordinator, city of Ithaca*

## **Putting Efficiency First**

Along with the strong push for energy-efficient buildings, Ithaca has been certified as a Climate Smart Community after completing multiple greenhouse gas emissions inventories, creating an Energy Action Plan for reducing those emissions, and developing a comprehensive plan for improving the City’s livability and walkability. The city continues to monitor and improve its energy use through its Green Building Policy and will be advancing aggressive goals through the Ithaca Green New Deal.

Ithaca also completed the Clean Fleets High Impact Action by installing electric vehicle charging stations in municipal parking garages, substantially increasing the use of electric vehicles throughout the city.

In 2013, Ithaca participated in a successful countywide Solarize Campaign with 60 public events, local volunteer outreach, and media coverage, resulting in more than 400 homes adopting solar in one year. Solar has since grown steadily in Ithaca, and community leaders are confident growth will continue.

## **Ithaca Has the Energy to Make it Happen**

- By implementing Clean Energy Communities High Impact Action Energize NY Finance, Ithaca increased opportunities for building owners to reduce each building’s carbon footprint by up to 50%, with the goal of all new buildings reaching a net zero standard by 2030.
- A successful countywide solarize campaign placed solar panels on 400 homes.
- A NYSERDA grant of \$100,000 is being used, in part, to fund the installation of LED lighting upgrades throughout the city’s municipal parking garages.

NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities Program provides tools, resources, and technical assistance, and recognizes and rewards leadership for completing clean energy projects in 10 High Impact Actions.

**Learn how to implement clean energy actions, save energy costs, create jobs, and improve the environment.**

Visit: [nyserdera.ny.gov/clean-energy-communities](https://nyserdera.ny.gov/clean-energy-communities)

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