



Rochester rocks climate innovation

Case Study

Location:
Rochester
(Monroe County)

High Impact Actions Taken:

- Climate Smart Communities
- Clean Fleets
- LED Streetlight and Solarize
- Unified Solar Permit

Background

Rochester is the third-most populous city in New York State, with a long history of invention and cutting-edge thinking. A progressive city with an immensely diverse population of almost 210,000, Rochester is home to several notable universities and major employers, and a community that created a strong awareness and push for clean energy initiatives and sustainability.

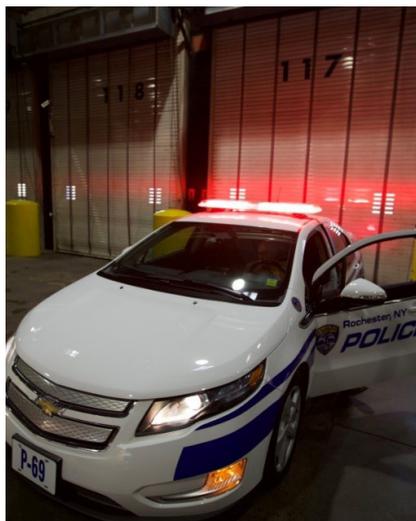
Rochester implemented a variety of sustainability initiatives and has been at the forefront of clean energy for years, with a driving ambition to keep raising its goals. When presented with the opportunity to set new standards, Rochester rose to the challenge. A dedicated team worked together to complete four High Impact Actions to become a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) designated Clean Energy Communities (CEC).

Becoming a Clean Energy Community

Rochester first established its own Climate Action Plan informed by public input collected from surveys and funded by the Cleaner Greener Communities Program. The community pushed hard toward achieving its goal of a 20% energy reduction by 2022 and 40% by 2040 to earn the Climate Smart Communities Certification, a NYSERDA High-Impact Action Item.

With many different projects and initiatives done or in process, the city is on track to meet its ambitious goals. All streetlights are currently being retrofitted with LED lighting and permeable pavements were installed in the City Hall's employee parking lot, which reduces storm water runoff into the sewer system and improves water quality.

City Hall has a green roof covered with a growing medium and a four-inch layer of sedum plants, which reduces stormwater runoff by up to 90%, offers protection from ultraviolet light (UV), provides thermal heating in winter, reduces heat gain in summer, and prolongs the roof's life. The project was funded through a grant from the Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Program.



The Rochester Public Market, with more than 300 vendors and thousands of shoppers, has two of the city’s EV charging stations and 66 solar panels that generate energy for the market and send surplus to the power grid. Since installation, the solar panels reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 120,000 pounds.

An Energized Community

When it comes to reducing vehicle emissions, Rochester has 15 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles, three CNG street sweepers, eight Chevy Volt police vehicles, and two Chevy Bolts (100% electric) for municipal services—and one of the highest electric vehicle charging usage rates in the country. With funding from NYSERDA, Rochester recently upgraded all 36 ports at 11 locations to level 2 chargers for public and municipal use.

The City also ran a Solarize campaign that resulted in a 2-megawatt (MW) solar field built on a former landfill. In addition, a Unified Solar Permit is making it easier and faster for building owners to implement solar projects, helping Rochester reach its energy reduction goals.

“We want communities to know that if we can do it, so can they.”

— Anne Spaulding, Manager of Environmental Quality

Rochester has the energy to make it happen

- By implementing Clean Energy Communities High Impact Action Climate Smart Communities Certification in their community, Rochester has gotten closer to its goal of 20% energy reduction by 2022 and a 40% reduction by 2040.
- Rochester has become one of the nation’s leaders in EV charging ports with 36 ports in 11 locations.
- Rochester is upgrading to LED lights in several community and recreational facilities and completing a Resiliency Plan to negate potential climate change issues within the city.

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: nyserda.ny.gov/clean-energy-communities

Call: 1-866-NYSERDA



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