



# Historic community leaps toward the future

## Case Study

Location:  
Hillsdale  
(Columbia County)

High Impact Actions Taken:

- Benchmarking
- Energy Code Enforcement Training
- Clean Fleets
- LED Street Lights

## Background

Hillsdale, a small town in Columbia County with less than 2,000 people, set impressive sustainability, livability, and energy efficiency goals. As a town defined by historic architectural structures, Hillsdale has a unique challenge: upgrade its housing and building stock to meet aggressive new energy efficiency goals and put walkability, innovation, and economy at the forefront while maintaining the town's charm.

From a walkable downtown to decreased greenhouse gas emissions, the main goal is to enhance residents' quality of life, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA) Clean Energy Communities (CEC) program was the solution. A small group of residents, with a passion for progress, is leading the charge. Upon reviewing the requirements for the CEC designation, the group realized they were already on the way, starting with tracking energy usage for the town hall, sheriff's station, town garage, and comptroller's office. Tracking showed energy use dropped 65% after installing 16 LED lights at the town hall. This made the Benchmarking High Impact Action an obvious first choice and allowed the town to begin Energy Code Enforcement Training.

## Upgrading The Building Stock

A large part of introducing energy code upgrades is education and awareness, especially in a town with older buildings not up to current standards. Paul Durenburger, Code Enforcement Officer, shared the importance of energy codes with building owners and contractors; however, some initially resisted the cost and time investment needed to meet the standards. With more information, attitudes started to shift, and once the work was done and energy bills came in, building owners were pleased to find lower recurring energy costs.



## Bringing in Electric Vehicles

The success the town had leading energy efficiency and clean energy would have never been possible without Tom Carty, who served eight years as chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. His dedication prompted the town to install an electric vehicle charging station at the town hall. Since installation, reports show the charging station is used by 15 different vehicles monthly, allowing residents access to cleaner, more efficient technology.

## Lighting Up The Town

The community's next step will be LED streetlight upgrades downtown. From there, NYSERDA CEC grant money will allow Hillsdale to install solar panels on the town garage.

With the goal of walkability front and center, they will be expanding the local rail trail, adding more sidewalks, and improving crosswalks. Local leaders are also working to attract new residents and businesses to the community. One historic building has been restored with upgraded energy systems and now houses a popular brewery and restaurant.

## Hillsdale Has The Energy to Make it Happen

- By implementing Clean Energy Communities High Impact Action Energy Code Enforcement Training, local officials advanced an education program to encourage energy efficiency upgrades. Since buildings represent roughly 60% of New York's total energy consumption, improved Energy Code compliance can result in significant energy savings.
- Energy usage dropped 65% from the 16 LED lights installed at the town hall.
- A NYSERDA CEC grant of \$80,000 will provide more LED Street Lighting upgrades and solar panels on the roof of the town's highway garage, lowering energy usage and costs.

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.

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