



Annual Progress Report

CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE ANNUAL UPDATE

AT A GLANCE

- New Lebanon's Climate Vision Statement
- Green House Gas (GHG) Update
- Energy Upgrades
- Community Efforts
- Thank You to Our Volunteers



What's New

Shooting for Silver

The Climate Smart Task Force developed this report with the intention of producing one every year to show progress that has been made with the ongoing community-led environmental efforts. On March 4th, 2021 New Lebanon became the first Bronze certified Climate Smart Community in Columbia County. The town was awarded 130 points through completing 22 actions geared towards making our community more sustainable and resilient to climate change. Now, New Lebanon is on the path to becoming Silver! This report highlights some of key initiatives and programs occurring throughout New Lebanon in effort to get the 300 points needed for Silver. This certification will open up new grant and funding opportunities to further strengthen the community.

Visions and Principals for a Sustainable, Resilient New Lebanon

In October of 2023, CSC Task Force Member Steve Powers and Ted Salem, chair of the Zoning Rewrite Committee, attended a workshop hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension, Columbia and Greene Counties to develop a climate vision statement for New Lebanon. This is a component of the Climate Smart Action PE7: Climate Adaptation Plan. On November 14th the Town Board approved the following statement:

A climate resilient New Lebanon will:

- Be an attractive, well-maintained, inclusive, and caring community that values its diverse population;
- Strive to maintain its rural character, scenic beauty, and natural resources, while balancing the need for renewable energy, and affordable housing;
- Preserve its cultural and historic heritage;
- And promote carefully thought out commercial and residential growth, responsible land use, efficient and effective public services, and social and recreational opportunities.

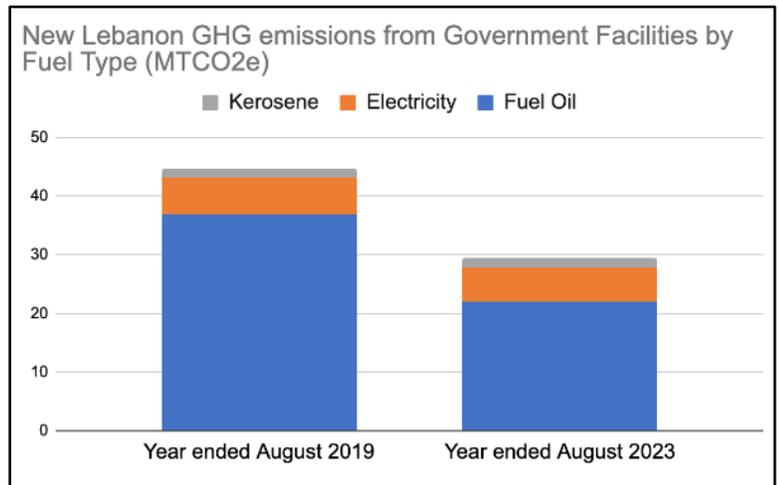
The Town of New Lebanon is dedicated to proactively responding and adapting to the ever- changing natural environment to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of its residents. To that end, New Lebanon is committed to working with public utilities, and Federal, State and County Agencies, to prepare for climate emergencies. New Lebanon, through its Climate Smart Communities Task Force, will educate town agencies, local business owners, and residents about best practices for reducing greenhouse gasses by promoting sustainable energy, recycling, and composting, among other practices. Our Conservation Advisory Committee will advise the Town Board, the Planning Board and the Zoning Rewrite Committee about how to best preserve and protect our natural resources; including, but not limited to: farmland, scenic beauty, wildlife habitats, and drinking water sources.

Green House Gas (GHG) Update

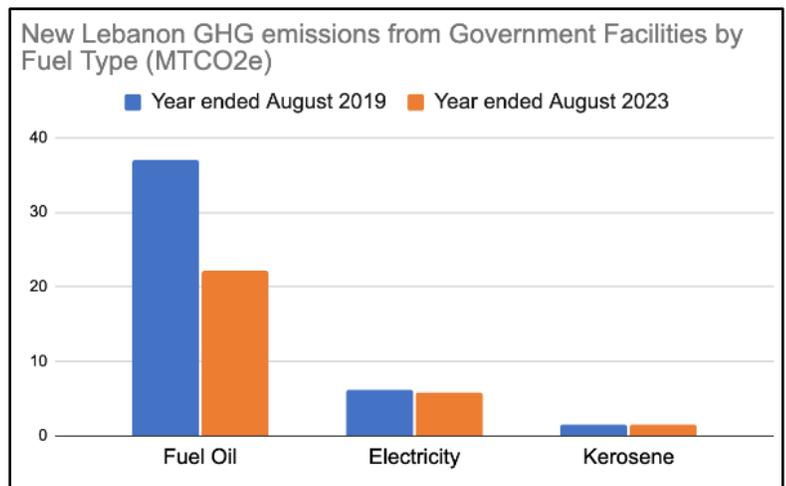
2023 was the first year we saw a significant drop in emissions.

New Lebanon has seen a **34% drop in GHGs from government facilities** (not including town vehicle emissions) since 2019 which is the first time the town did a comprehensive GHG inventory of town operations. Installing heat pumps and solar panels in addition to converting all street lights to LED bulbs in March of 2020 and installing LED lights in all of the town buildings in 2021, has led to a significant decrease in GHG emissions.

Emissions fell from 44.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent (MTCO₂e) by the end of Aug 2019 to 29.4 MTCO₂e by August 2023. This drop in reductions is a sign of excellent progress towards our sustainably goals. Based off the recently published Climate Action Plan (CAP) developed and approved by the CSC Task Force, the plan outlines New Lebanon's **new goal which is to have a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from non-diesel sources by 2030** and an overall reduction of 17.5% from 2019 levels, targeting a 50% reduction in the town's total emissions by 2040. Total emissions include vehicle emissions which were not included in the latest analysis. The plan can be found on the New Lebanon CSC website.



WE'VE GREATLY REDUCED THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUEL USED WHILE ALSO REDUCING GHG EMISSIONS.



NEW LEBANON'S FUEL OIL DEPENDENCE HAS DECREASED

The largest decrease in emissions came from the drop in fuel oil usage at the Town Hall and Garage as 5/6 of the heat pumps first came online in winter 2023. **This marks 2023 as the year when we have seen the biggest impact of our efforts at reducing GHG emissions.** Even though electricity usage rose at these buildings because of the heat pumps, the resulting emissions were far lower. With the solar panels installed this summer, we anticipate the energy produced from them will offset the electricity cost of the heat pumps.

Energy Upgrades



(LEFT) HEAT PUMP INSTALLED AT NEW LEBANON TOWN GARAGE IN FEBRUARY 2022 *(RIGHT)* SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED AT NEW LEBANON TOWN HALL JULY 2023

In 2022, **New Lebanon was awarded \$120,000 in grant money for energy upgrades** that allowed the town to install 6 heat pumps and 50 solar panels. We are proud to be the first municipality in the region to reach 5000 points in NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities program! These building retrofits have been crucial for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from town municipal buildings.

Heat pumps offer heating in the winter and cooling in the summer. According to the Department of Energy, a heat pump on average uses 65% less energy for heating compared to furnaces and baseboard heaters. The energy efficiency of heat pumps lowers utility costs while also reducing our greenhouse gas emissions! In the past we have hosted heat pump webinar campaigns where over 75 participants learned about heat pumps. Look out for announcements about future webinars in 2024!

Solar Panels: On August 24, 2023 the rooftop solar panels installed above the town hall were switched on. The panels are estimated to generate 22,315 kWh/year offsetting 89% of the energy consumption of Town Hall and the Town Garage. Photovoltaicolar (PV) solar panels are a clean source of energy that converts sunlight into electricity and is 100% renewable and emits zero greenhouse gas pollution. The energy produced by the solar panels is available to the public with the link to the [tracking dashboard](#) on the [CSC website](#). **In September 2023, the solar panels produced 2.1 MWh, resulting in an environmental impact equivalent to a CO2 reduction of 1.5 tons!**

Other Ongoing Community Efforts

Climate resilience involves the whole community.

Climate resilience is not limited to energy upgrades, it requires a multi-sector approach and engagement from the entire community. The following is a list of ongoing sustainability efforts happening throughout New Lebanon:

- **Plastic Bag Recycling:** Started in 2023, in partnership with NexTrex, a composite deck company, residents can recycle plastic bags and film at the box located inside the town hall.
- **Battery Recycling Program:** Residents can recycle old batteries at the collection boxes located in both Post Offices, Town Hall, the Library, a hardware store and the Farmers Market. Batteries are collected once a month and shipped to a company called the Big Green Box. To date we have recycled over 1000lbs.
- **Repair Cafes:** Follow the Climate Smart Task Force on Facebook for regular event updates!
- **Composting:** The CSC Task force has multiple ongoing composting projects. In December 2023, the CSC task force published an Organics Management plan which can be found on their website.
- **EV Charging Station:** In November 2021, New Lebanon added an electric vehicle charging station. The charger is located at the Tilden Road trail head.
- **Community Fridge:** Located at Mavericks where anyone can stock or receive free food.
- **Columbia County Climate Carnival:** After the successful event in the summer of 2022, New Lebanon in partnership with surrounding towns is working together with Columbia County to put on another Climate Carnival in the Summer of 2024.
- **New Lebanon Free Store:** Located inside the Town Hall, the free store is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am – 5pm.
- **Buy Local/ Buy Green:** See the CSC website for more information about ways you can shop small and support local businesses.
- **Cooling Center:** On August 8th 2023, the Library was designated as an official cooling center. On days with intense heat consider spending time at the library! The cooling center operates during regular library hours from 10am-6pm Monday-Wednesday, and Friday, 10am-7pm on Thursday and 10am-1pm on Saturdays.



If you are interested in becoming more involved email Steve Powers at nlcscchair@gmail.com

Thank You Volunteers!

On behalf of the Climate Smart Task Force, we would like to thank all the volunteers that have contributed to making our community more sustainable and resilient to climate change. The progress that has been made over the years would not be possible without the amazing dedication of New Lebanites. It is because of volunteers we have a community where anyone can easily have access to a new-to-you recycled bikes, can fix damaged goods at the repair cafes, grow food in the community garden with soil made from local compost, **and so much more.** We applaud all volunteers in whatever capacity and give the sincerest thanks and appreciation to you.

