

# Summary:

## Sustainable Hudson Valley and Climate Smart Rhinebeck: Climate Action Toolkit Workshop

January 5, 2023, Trustee Vanessa Bertozzi

### INTRO



Starr Library hosted this session on the evening of January 5th, 2023. The event was promoted through newsletters and social media from Sustainable Hudson Valley, Starr Library, and Climate Smart Rhinebeck. Over 70 people RSVPed and over 60 people attended.

Judging from the about 40 evaluation forms people filled out, over half were from the Village, with a little over a quarter from the Town, and a little under a quarter from nearby municipalities (some of whom joined us to see if they should run this event in their location). Of those who filled out the evaluation, there was near unanimous positive feedback about the evening—though also unanimous feedback that more time was needed for breakout groups!

First, [Sustainable Hudson Valley](#)'s Executive Director Melissa Everett, Ph.D. gave a presentation overviewing NY State's nation-leading [CLCPA legislation and scoping plan](#) and what it means for our region. Attendees were seated in the upstairs of the library with Melissa projecting slides.



Then, a short spotlight honored Jeff Scales and Leola Specht for their support through JSA Sustainable Wealth Management. (Leola here, pictured trying out the library's Bike Book!)

For the second part of the program, Rhinebeck Village Trustee and [Climate Smart Rhinebeck](#) Coordinator Vanessa Bertozzi did a quick introduction, highlighting some actions the Village has taken for each of the following five themes:

- Housing/Buildings
- Transportation & Mobility
- Land Use
- Business District & Local Economy
- Waste & Materials Management

Trustee Bertozzi invited attendees to join one of 5 breakout groups along these themes.

Each breakout group had a facilitator and 10 to 15 participants. During the breakout groups, facilitators could gather ideas from participants workshop climate-related ideas, which were written on index cards, that the Climate Smart Rhinebeck Task Force shared with the Village's Comprehensive Plan subcommittees. The worksheets prompted participants to focus on one or two ideas and discuss challenges and opportunities within the local context.

After the breakout groups, everyone came back together to read out highlights of their discussions. The following summary is pulled from the readouts as well as worksheets and evaluation forms attendees were given.

<h2>What motivated people to come</h2>
<p>People want what's best for their community, they feel their community should be taking action, and they want to connect with others in their community to discuss how to move forward.</p>
<p>They have a concern for their future and/or for children's future.</p>
<p>They came to the event looking for education/learning/knowledge, perspective, and finally action.</p>

## BREAKOUT GROUP WORK

### Housing / Buildings

A challenge: People need to be educated and informed in order to act. Many of these actions are \$ investments.

Idea #1: Host an event with energy coaches and contractors and people who can explain incentives and tax rebates.

Idea #2: The municipal Building Department could educate applicants about energy efficiency & work with the local architects and builders who deal with the office regularly.

Idea #3: Build a partnership with the high school to train young people to be energy coaches (great summer job or entree into a career that will be in high demand).

### Business District / Local Economies

A challenge: The Village is confined to a limited space; perceived lack of parking.

Idea #1: Explore the best way to deal with parking in the village: i.e. meters, promote public transit, bike racks, sidewalks between village and school, whether to have a parking garage?

Idea #2: Explore ways to continue supporting the Farmers' Market so it thrives and acts as an anchor in the village.

Idea #3: Explore the idea of a trolley or shuttle into downtown.

### Transportation & Mobility

A challenge: People don't feel safe biking or walking.

Idea #1: Adopt "Complete Streets" and "Safe Routes to School" to consider everything from narrowing car lanes to calm traffic, bike lanes, sidewalks, and intersections, to stormwater runoff and street trees.

A challenge: Getting around is disjointed.

Idea #2: Public transit and connecting bike paths that serve seniors and low-income residents, that connect into affordable housing, and connect "islands" of Rhinecliff and Tops.

## Waste & Materials Management

A challenge: Waste is a huge but “invisible” problem and individuals are stuck in the status quo.

Idea #1: Support institutional partners in composting (School district, the hospital, supermarket, the restaurants, Fairground).

A challenge: There is innovation in handling waste, but places need to be turned on to it.

Idea #2: Promote and support innovative thinking by coordinating between the village, town, county, and other municipalities.

A challenge: Clothing waste and fast fashion is a huge problem.

Idea #3: Collaborate with Repair Cafe to have more clothing repair. Set up a used clothing bin or swap.

A challenge: Our Wastewater Treatment Plant produces biosolids.

Idea #4: These biosolids are now being composted but at a facility far away. Redesign the plant to handle onsite.

## Land Use

A challenge: People are NIMBY about solar farms.

Idea #1: Use the Scenic Hudson method to identify where to proactively put solar. Do the math: maybe we only need, say, 30 acres of solar to serve the whole town?

A challenge: How to make smart growth and denser development politically acceptable.

Idea #2: Importance of showing benefits and how it's not onerous to live close to one's neighbors. Building trust, personal communication, offer choices among options and a sense that we need to be grownups if we all want to live in a healthy environment.

A challenge: Overcoming sense of entitlement about parking.

Idea #3: Debunk the idea that parking can keep expanding. It costs \$12,000 per aboveground parking space and as much as \$30,000 for underground, + maintenance. Parking should be some form of utility. Identify alternate ways to accommodate cars, people, mobility such as public lots on the periphery of a village and walking/ shuttle/ etc.

Many places do annual or occasional Parking Day where people take over parking spaces with basketball hoops, art activities, card games etc. and publicize widely. It has to be a campaign.

A challenge: The Village has limited public space.

Idea #4: Maximizing creativity about diverse uses of public spaces.

*Anonymized transcribed and compiled notes & evaluations can be found [here](#).*