The Town of DeWitt, an eastern suburb of Syracuse in Onondaga County, is considered a crossroads of New York State with its proximity to Interstates 481, 690 and 90 (NYS Thruway), Syracuse Hancock International Airport, and major rail yards. A portion of the town is part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, which contains usable and historic portions of the Erie Canal, and due to the legacy of the Canal, residents have access to 13 parks and green spaces with plenty of trails. This town of 26,000 is the home of Carrier Corporation’s engineering and design center, Jamesville Quarry and part of the campus of LeMoyne College.

Sustainability policy has been flourishing in the Town of DeWitt under the leadership of Supervisor Ed Michalenko and the DeWitt Town Board. From the installation of solar panels on the Town Hall roof in 2010 to the adoption and implementation of a Sustainability Plan in 2014 and beyond, the town is working to balance economic, social and environmental interests to meet residents’ needs now without compromising the future needs of the community and the planet. The Sustainability Plan includes addressing greenhouse gas emissions, urban forest management, stormwater infrastructure, invasive species, water conservation, renewable energy, open space and walkable communities, all while demonstrating significant cost savings in every project.

**PROGRAM**

Funding for nearly all of the 51 kw solar array installed on the Town Hall roof in 2010 came from a State Dormitory Grant, NYSERDA, and a Central NY Regional Planning and Development Board Grant of $30,000 as a demonstration project in the Central NY Climate Change Innovation Program, under the US Environmental Protection Agency Climate Showcase Communities Program. In its first four years of operation, the panels produced a total of 100,188.67 kWh of electricity and reduced the town’s carbon footprint by 154,615 pounds of CO₂, equivalent to the amount of carbon sequestered by about 57 acres of US forests in one year. DeWitt has demonstrated significant costs savings in every project, making it easy to be fiscally responsible while protecting the environment.

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For example, the town anticipates that it will save more than $2 million over the 25-year life of a planned landfill solar project. Thus, the town experienced no skepticism or pushback from the community on these projects.

Thanks to a grant from NYSERDA, the town is also currently moving toward increasing their electric vehicle infrastructure to achieve their goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 15% by 2020, as outlined in the town’s Sustainability Plan. The Town Board has purchased two all-electric Chevy Bolts for code enforcement and installed three electric vehicle charging stations at DeWitt Town Hall which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for public use.

**PROCESS**

In 2009, Supervisor Michalenko formed a sustainability advisory group which became the Sustainability Committee and is currently under the direction of the Director of Planning and Zoning, Samuel Gordon. Its policies have been guiding Town Board decisions since 2010, and the creation and adoption of a Town Sustainability Plan in 2014 set tangible goals for energy efficiency and carbon dioxide reductions. The town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a two megawatt solar installation on its municipal landfill in 2016, selected a contractor, and is anticipating construction will begin in early 2019. Together, these projects will provide the town with 100% renewable electricity for municipal operations.

How has DeWitt moved so systematically towards climate adaptation and sustainable living? Supervisor Michalenko serves as President of the Onondaga Environmental Institute, “a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to public education, scientific research, planning and restoration of the environment.”

With a doctoral degree from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, he has the vision and the skills to help guide DeWitt in its transition to renewable energy and sustainability. The Town Board has been unanimously behind these efforts, adopting the comprehensive Sustainability Plan and a solar energy ordinance to facilitate the implementation of renewable energy installations.

**TAKEAWAYS**

Samuel Gordon, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town, suggested engagement with outside consultants to help manage some of the more difficult or complex processes, as DeWitt did to help guide the solar Request For Proposal (RFP) process for the two MW landfill solar project. He also recommended using the cost savings from early projects as a way of paying for the upfront costs of other projects.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact Samuel Gordon, Director of Planning and Zoning, at sgordon@townofdewitt.com, or (315) 446-3910 ext 3.

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STATE PROGRAMS

CLEAN ENERGY COMMUNITIES
Amherst, East Hampton, Red Hook  Under NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities program, communities that complete four out of the 10 High Impact Actions and meet all other eligibility requirements are designated by New York State as a Clean Energy Community and are eligible to apply for grants to fund additional clean energy projects. Those ten actions are:

- **Benchmarking** - Adopt a policy to report the energy use of buildings
- **Clean Energy Upgrades** - Achieve 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from buildings
- **LED Street Lights** - Convert street lights to energy efficient LED technology
- **Clean Fleets** - Install electric vehicle charging stations or deploy alternative fuel vehicles
- **Solarize** - Undertake a local solarize campaign to increase the number of solar rooftops
- **Unified Solar Permit** - Streamline the approvals process for solar
- **Energy Code Enforcement Training** - Train compliance officers in energy code best practices
- **Climate Smart Communities Certification** - Get certified by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- **Community Choice Aggregation** - Put energy supply choices in your community’s hands
- **Energize New York Finance** - Offer energy upgrade financing to businesses and non-profits

CLEAN ENERGY STANDARD/RPS
Eagle, East Hampton  The Clean Energy Standard requires that 50% of New York’s electricity come from renewable energy sources such as solar and wind by 2030. New renewable projects provide enormous benefits to local communities, including: reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, economic investment and PILOT payments, and new, high quality jobs in the clean energy sector.

COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION
Ossining  Community Choice Aggregation allows local governments to work together through a shared purchasing model to procure energy supply service and distributed energy resources for eligible customers within the jurisdictional boundaries of participating municipalities. Eligible customers will have the opportunity to have more control to lower their overall energy costs, to spur clean energy innovation and investment, to improve customer choice and value, and to protect the environment, thereby fulfilling an important public purpose.

GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMP REBATE
Lockport  NYSERDA’s Ground Source Heat Pump Rebate provides funding for the installation of ground source heat pump systems for residences, businesses and institutions. Benefits include lower and less volatile energy bills, greater resiliency and reliability, and health benefits from this emissions-free technology.

MUNICIPAL ZERO EMISSION VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE REBATE PROGRAM
Amherst, DeWitt, Red Hook, Schenectady  The Municipal ZEV Infrastructure Rebate Program provides rebates to cities, towns, villages, and counties (including New York City boroughs) to install publicly available charging stations. Installation of these charging stations will help electrify New York’s transportation sector and meet its climate goals, putting local communities on the road to energy independence while helping to reduce emissions harmful to the environment.

NY-SUN
Avon, Clarkstown, Delaware, DeWitt, Grand Island, Red Hook, Schenectady  NY-Sun provides multiple resources for local governments to install solar energy, including financing, incentives, and training/education to identify opportunities and mitigate barriers, providing the tools necessary to build clean, affordable solar programs to power their communities.

REFORMING THE ENERGY VISION DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS
Schenectady  New York State is seeking demonstration projects to show how new products and services can capture latent value on the grid, and how new business models can monetize and distribute that value across third parties, utilities and customers. While New York’s investor-owned utilities have been directed to partner with third parties to develop a first round of REV demonstration projects, the utilities will continue to undertake demonstration projects until these kinds of products and services are fully integrated into core system operations.