

Local Climate Neutral Pledges

PURPOSE

To reduce the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) produced in a community as much as possible and capture or offset the GHGs that are still emitted.

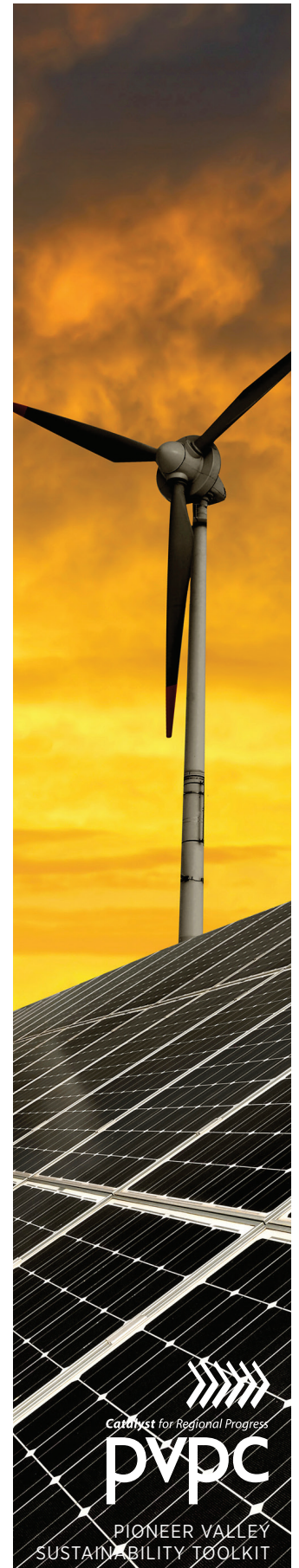
HOW IT WORKS

Greenhouse gasses (GHG) trap solar radiation which gradually increases the overall temperature in the earth's atmosphere in an effect known as "global warming". Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are some of the main GHGs that our activities produce. Climate neutral pledges promote greater accountability on GHG emissions in a community and can lead to reductions of these emissions.

A climate neutral pledge works best when it is adopted as one step in a series of actions that cities and towns can choose follow in order to reduce their GHG emissions:

1. Identify and quantify all sources of greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Adopt a Climate Neutral Pledge** that states emissions reduction goals.
3. Create an action plan that the community can implement to reduce or offset emissions and meet its goals
4. Implement the emission reduction plan through energy efficiency, renewable energy and other change as needed.
5. Review community successes, failures and lessons learned

In neighboring New York State, municipalities join the "Climate Smart Communities" program, where each participating community adopts a model pledge as a resolution of the governing body, and can add their own elements. Communities also agree to: set goals to reduce GHGs; establish a task force; gather data about local GHG emissions and sources; develop a local action plan for reducing GHG emissions; adopt the state's goal of reducing electricity use by 15% by 2015; maximize use of public energy generated from renewable sources; and adopt land use regulations to reduce sprawl and plan for climate changes, amongst other possible steps.



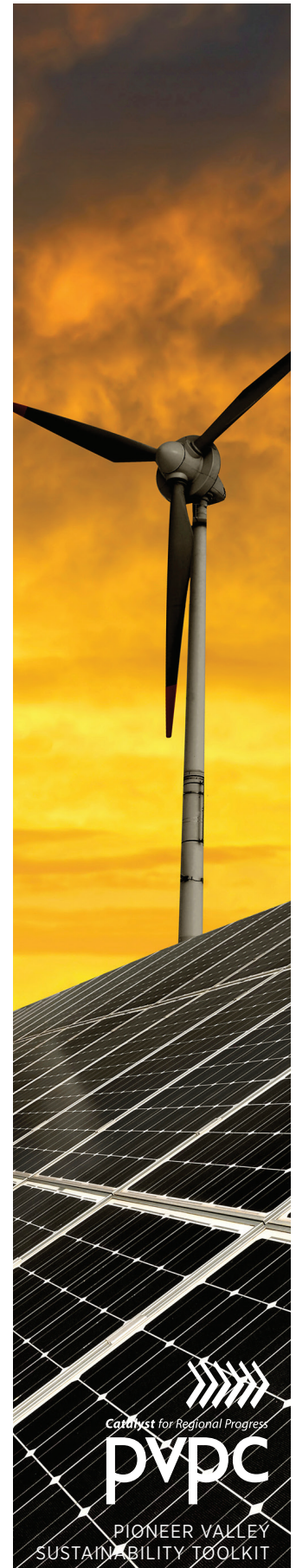
EXAMPLES OF WHERE STRATEGY HAS BEEN ADOPTED

In the United States, the city of Chapel Hill, South Carolina has long strived to reduce its impact on the environment, both within its municipal operations and more generally throughout the community. In 2006 the Town signed onto the Community Carbon Reduction (CRed) pledge, through which they aim to reduce the total carbon emissions attributed to Town municipal operations by at least 60% by 2050.

In New York state, Schenectady, Red Hook and more than 40 other municipalities recently adopted the “Climate Smart Communities Pledge”, a commitment to systematically cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other GHGs. Schenectady has implemented several ambitious green initiatives, including an aggressive energy efficiency performance contract that has prevented emissions of more than 1 million pounds of carbon dioxide, an updated heating system for City Hall, energy conservation LED traffic lights, and a first-of-its-kind Green Homes program.

In Massachusetts, 86 municipalities, 12 of them from the Pioneer Valley, have already pledged to reduce their municipal government energy use by at least 20% in five years through the Green Communities program. These communities usually begin acting on that pledge like Schenectady, by aggressively implementing energy efficiency measures in public buildings, which creates savings both on emissions and on utility bills.

Over 270 American colleges and universities have adopted carbon neutral pledges, as well as a growing list of foreign countries, such as Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Iceland, The Maldives, Monaco, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Pakistan, and Portugal.



LINKS TO MODEL BYLAWS OR MORE INFORMATION

CLIMATE NEUTRAL NETWORK:

<http://www.unep.org/climateneutral/About/tabid/95/Default.aspx>

NEW YORK STATE SMART COMMUNITIES CLIMATE NEUTRALITY RESOLUTION TEXT:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/65494.html>

COMMUNITY CARBON REDUCTION (CRED) PLEDGE OF CHAPEL HILL:

<http://sustainability.unc.edu/Initiatives/ClimateChange.aspx>

AMERICAN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S CLIMATE COMMITMENT:

<http://presidentsclimatecommitment.org/about/commitment>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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