

# **THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Political  
Influence and  
Getting it Right

December 6, 2024





# A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF NEW CASTLE (2017)

Picture of the Town Assembly Room at the Public Hearing prior to the Town Board's Decision to Adopt the Plan.

The picture did not capture the people in the hallway-  
"Standing Room Only"

# ZONING IS DIFFERENT

It Has to be Specific . . .

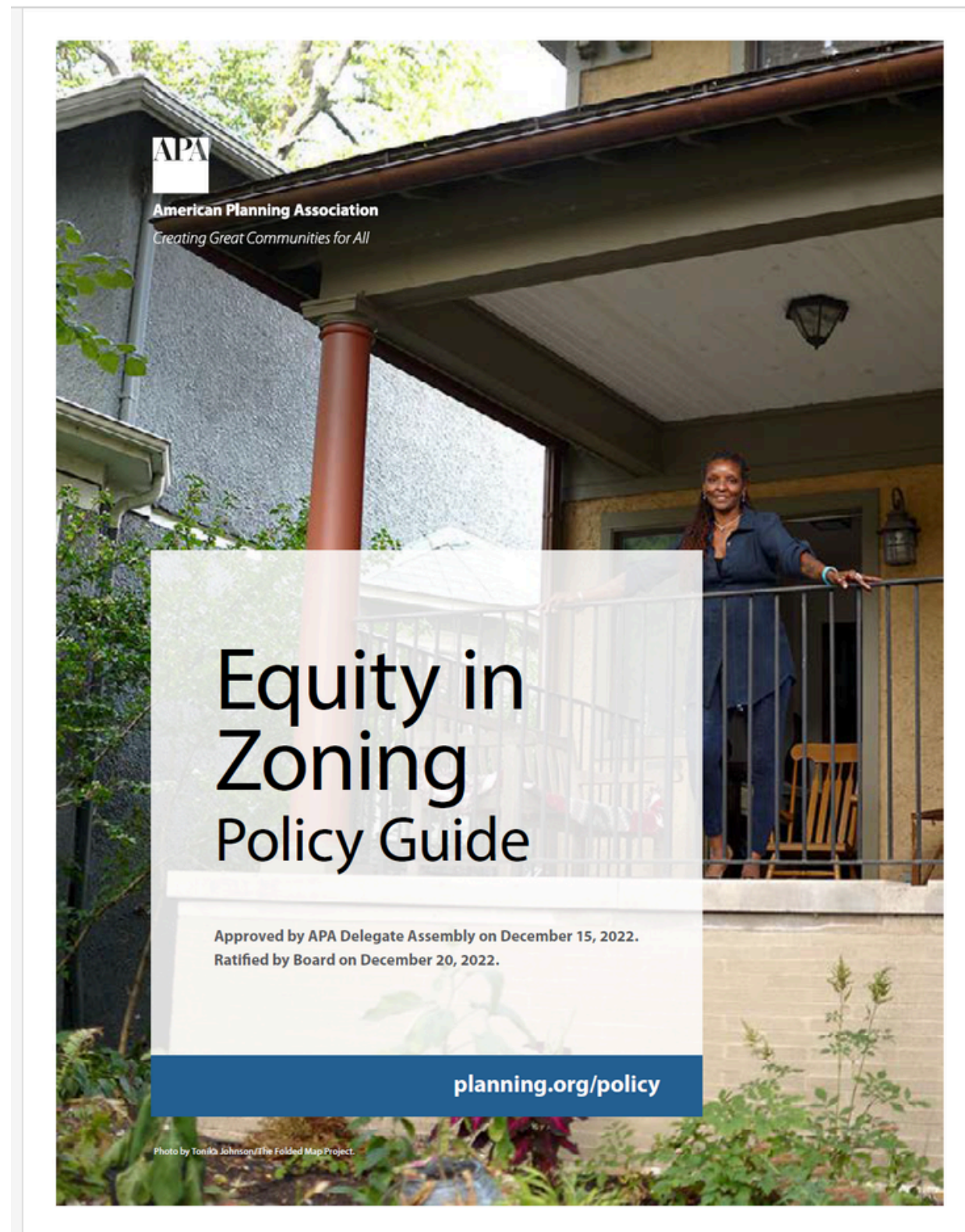
And Sometimes the  
Right Answer is “No”



# ZONING IS DIFFERENT

- It needs to focus on how the public wants (or does not want) to implement policies and goals articulated in adopted plans in a specific situation or on a specific parcel of land
- And the possible implementation tools are subject to significant limitations under constitutional and state law.
- After an initial round to elicit general preferences – focus on drafts text and images.
- Provide as much candor as possible – pass the “small test”.
- Often it is not very helpful to use outside consultants or on-line platforms – do it yourself through direct conversation.
- Control the drafting process -- It is law, and it is fairly complex
- Work with/for the middle 80% -- Be respectful to the fringe 10% but do not let them drive or capture the process.

# SOMETIMES THE RIGHT ANSWER IS “NO”



1. Expand and maximize equitable engagement using multiple channels during the process of drafting zoning **rules** to establish zoning districts, form controls, use controls, and development standards.
2. Only require public hearings on **individual projects** when there is a genuine need to use discretion in applying zoning criteria and standards to the facts of a specific development proposal.

**Public hearings in the application of zoning rules to specific projects carry a strong bias in favor of privilege, English speakers, those familiar with how local government operates, and those who can afford representation at the**

# CASE STUDY | TOWN OF NEW CASTLE

## WEBSITE

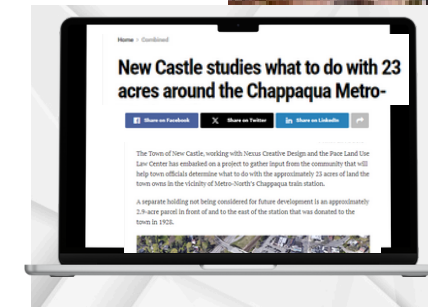
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS**

**POP UP EXPERIENCES + SOCIAL MEDIA**

Updates  
Purpose  
Placemaking  
Workshops

Farmers Market  
Traveling Board  
Train Station Kiosk  
Rotary Club  
Business Owners  
Senior Center  
Kids/Young Families Initiative

Videos  
Announcements  
Registrations



## WALKING TOUR + VIRTUAL TOUR

We invite you to participate in our Walking Tour for the Town of New Castle's Community Visioning Out Program. Across 5 stations, you'll find standing signs with QR codes to watch a video and submit feedback regarding the 23 acres of town land surrounding the Chappaqua Train Station. If you prefer to stay off screen, use this printout to guide you through the tour, answer the questions on the back, and hand in your completed sheet to Town Hall.

**Station 1** brings visitors to Town Hall. Here, you will encounter the newly constructed basketball court and one of the first assisted playgrounds in Westchester County. Functionally, this location serves as the headquarters for the recreation department, the police department, and the town hall. This building has not seen major changes since the 1960s.

**Station 2** is west of the town hall, playground and the basketball court. To the west are the train tracks and to the south is a single family neighborhood on Washington Street located in the Village of Pleasantville.

**Station 3** is at the heart of downtown Chappaqua. This area is used as a central commuter intersection and the commercial business district. Congestion occurs here generally during morning and evening commutes.

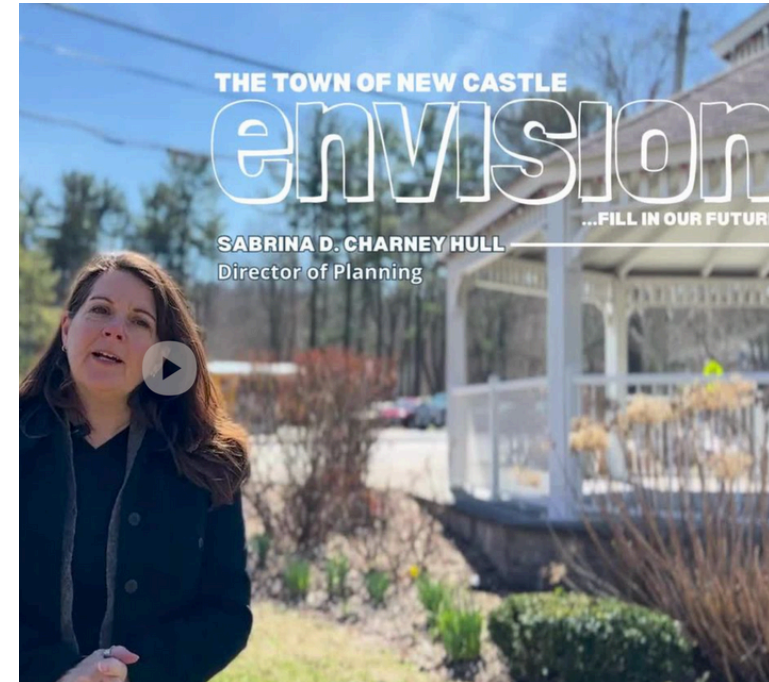
**Station 4a** is across the street from the Chappaqua Library. To the west, you will find Town Hall and Recreation Field. This intersection serves as the main gateway to the community and hosts main activities throughout the year.

**Station 4b** is across the street from the Chappaqua Library. To the west, you will find Town Hall and Recreation Field. This intersection serves as the main gateway to the community and hosts main activities throughout the year.

**Station 5** is located opposite the southern parking lot. Station 5 brings visitors to Town Hall. Here, you will encounter the newly constructed basketball court and one of the first assisted playgrounds in Westchester County.

**LEGEND**

- Town Hall
- Train Station/Memorial Circle
- Main Train Station Parking Entrance
- Parking
- Town Hall
- Transition between Parking lot C/D & B
- S. Greeley Frontage/Recreation Field
- Baseball Field
- Train Station



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- Town Hall
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- S. Greeley Frontage/Recreation Field
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- Home to Recreation Department, Police Department, and Town Hall.
- New basketball court.
- First assisted playground in Westchester County.
- Across from the southern train station parking lot.

**THE TOWN OF NEW CASTLE**  
**envision**  
...FILL IN OUR FUTURE

SCAN FOR INTRO VIDEO

**SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT STATION 1**

EnvisionNewCastle.com/station1

**JOIN US**

in filling in our future of the town land surrounding the Chappaqua Train Station.

EnvisionNewCastle.com

# THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | DECEMBER 6, 2024

## KEY MOMENTS

- Start with Clear Objectives and Timeline
- Create a Transparent Process
- Embrace Diverse Input Early
- Leverage Digital Tools to Expand Reach
- Facilitate Collaboration Across Sectors
- Keep Communication Accessible and Consistent
- Plan for Feedback Integration

**Public engagement is dynamic—being adaptable ensures long-term success.**

Maintain Momentum by highlighting progress, like publishing meeting summaries or survey results.

**DEFINING THE VISION FOR THE 23-ACRE TOWNLAND SURROUNDING THE TRAIN STATION CREATED A UNIFYING PURPOSE FOR STAKEHOLDERS.**

**1665** VIRTUAL TOUR VIEWS during active engagement

VIRTUAL TOUR PARTICIPATION RECEIVED

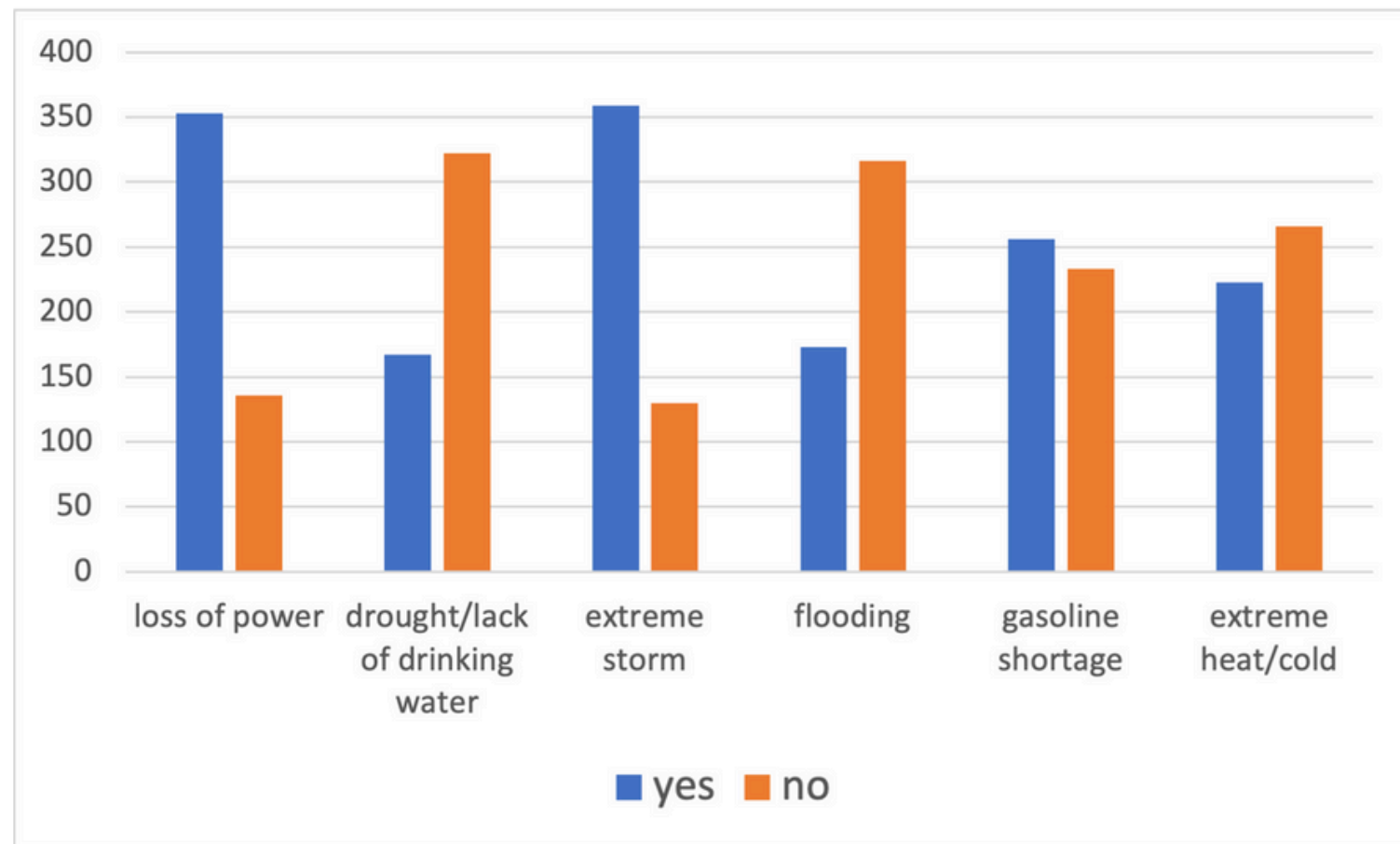
**10%+**

THAN IN PERSON SESSIONS

**8700** WEB VIEWS during active engagement

# SURVEY RESPONSES

Have you ever felt unsafe due to any of the following?



Respondents most answered that they felt unsafe from "loss of power" and "extreme storms."

# CLIMATE STORY



Dan Davidson,  
Roslyn Fire Department

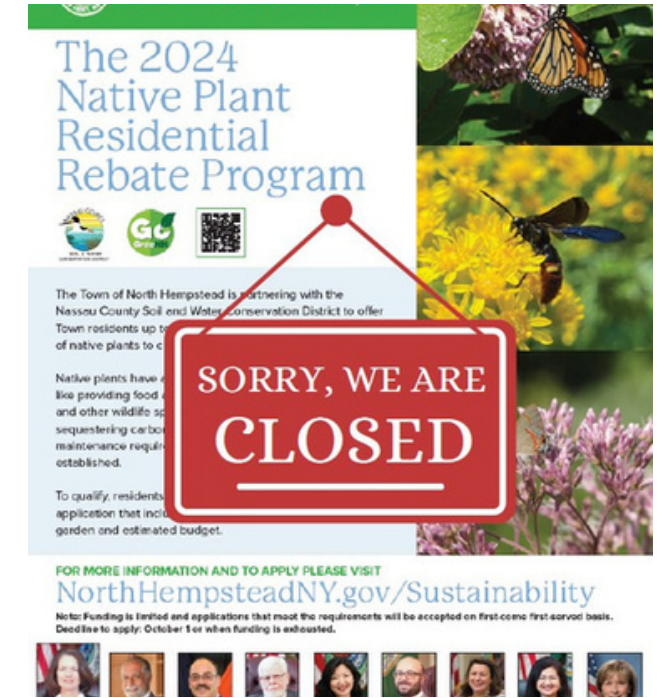
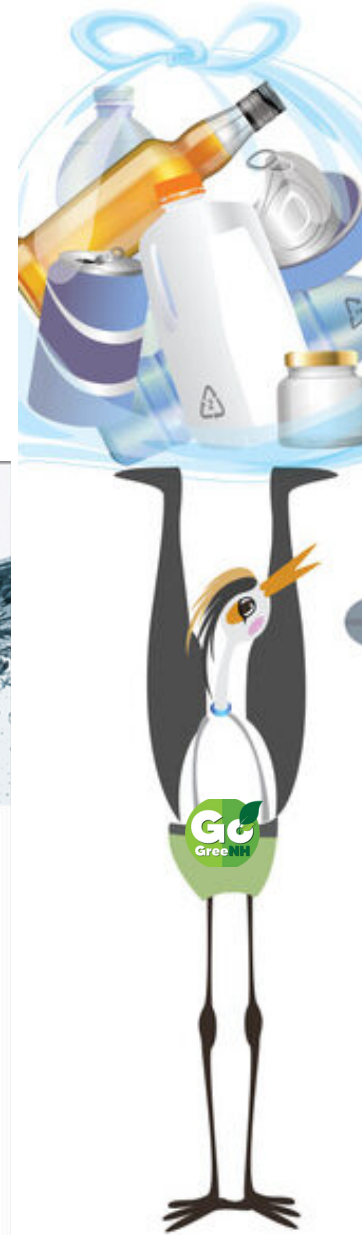
*We get more calls because there is an increase of storms with wind speeds greater than 35 MPH. This leads to more power outages, transformer fires, and wires down.*

*I feel worried for our kids.*

*I want to confront Climate Change and do what I can.*



# WE USED RESEARCH TO BUILD A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY



- Experts from PSEG-LI, the NY Solar Energy Industries Association, Drive Electric LI and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County will provide information on:
- Free home energy audits
  - Energy saving appliances and lighting
  - Renewable heating
  - Solar programs
  - Electric vehicles
  - Cornell Cooperative Extension's free Community Energy Advisor Program
  - State and federal rebates, incentives, and tax credits

Webinar is free for all, but registration is required. To register visit [NorthHempsteadNY.gov/ClimateAction](http://NorthHempsteadNY.gov/ClimateAction)

North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena and the Town Board present a virtual workshop

## UNDER OUR FEET: THE RESILIENCY OF OUR DRINKING WATER

Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 7 p.m.

Council Member Veronica Lurvey will lead a panel discussion on the state of Long Island's underground aquifers that provide all our drinking water, threats to these important resources, and actions the North Hempstead community can take to keep them resilient in the face of climate change.

**Hon. Veronica Lurvey**  
North Hempstead Council Member District 4

**Sam Adler**  
Town of North Hempstead middle school student dedicated to water conservation in the community

**Dr. Sarah J. Meyland**  
an Associate Professor of Environmental Technology and Sustainability at NYIT and Founder of Water for Long Island

**Meagan Fastuca**  
Town of North Hempstead Environmental Specialist focused on sustainability initiatives

**Mindy Germain**  
Commissioner of PW water district, lead organizer of the Western Nassau County Aquifer Committee

North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena and the Town Board present The North Hempstead Transportation Innovation Series

A free program hosted by the Town of North Hempstead to help residents reduce traffic and emissions by discovering greener ways to get around the Town.

### DON'T 'DRIVE' YOURSELF CRAZY! BINGO

Wednesday, February 16 at 7 p.m. – Virtual

Learn about extensive green mobility options in the Town, including local train, bus, shuttles, paratransit, and more through a fun game of virtual Bingo. Winners will receive a \$50 gift card to a Town of North Hempstead restaurant of choice. Facilitated by: Transit Solutions

### WALK OR BIKE NORTH HEMPSTEAD!

Wednesday, March 23 at 7 p.m. – Virtual

Walking and biking can provide many health, environmental, social, and economic benefits. Discover North Hempstead's shop and stroll scenes, walking and hiking trails, and biking opportunities. Facilitated by: Let's Move LI

### ELECTRIC VEHICLES - 101

Tuesday, April 12 at 2 p.m. – Clinton G. Martin Park

Uncover the basics about electric vehicles with a panel of experienced EV owners and an EV Show and Tell. Facilitated by: Drive Electric LI

and the Town Board encourage you to:

## Pollinator Pledge

Pollinator populations are in decline due in part to habitat loss, fragmentation, climate change, use of pesticides, and invasive species.

You can help these important animals by taking the Town of North Hempstead's Pollinator Pledge where you can pledge to carry out practices that benefit pollinators and the environment in your own landscape. This includes reducing or eliminating pesticide use, planting native plants, and managing invasive species.

Any property owner (including residents, businesses, schools, non-profits, and places of worship) that maintains a landscape can take the pledge and you will receive a digital certificate of appreciation from the Town.

FOR MORE INFORMATION Visit [northhempsteadny.gov/pollinators](http://northhempsteadny.gov/pollinators)

# HOW HAS NORTH HEMPSTEAD BENEFITED FROM THIS PROCESS?



- **2022-2023:** Completed Scope #1 and #2 GHG Inventory + Climate Action Plan
- **2023:** Bronze Certified Climate Smart Community
- **2023:** Secured NYSERDA Grant to conduct a Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan
- **2024:** Sold out of Rain Barrels, Composters, and Native Plant Rebates
- **2024:** #1 Town in LI for EV registrations, 47.2% growth in EV marketshare