



**CONTACT:** Midge Iorio  
Executive Director, Bedford 2020  
(914) 620-2411  
[midge.iorio@bedford2020.org](mailto:midge.iorio@bedford2020.org)

## Bedford Beats the Clock!

### **Bedford Becomes First Municipality in New York State to track, report and verify a 70% community wide GHG emission reduction.**

#### *Bedford 2020 Announces Town Far Exceeds Reduction 3 Years Ahead of Schedule*

BEDFORD, NY (May 2019) – Bedford 2020, a grassroots nonprofit committed to reducing carbon emissions and fighting climate change, announced that the Town of Bedford has become the first community in New York State to track, report, and verify a 70% Community wide GHG emission reduction, far exceeding its initial target of 20%.

The Town of Bedford adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2010 that set an aggressive GHG emissions reduction goal of 20% below its 2004 baseline by 2020 for municipal and community operations. Bedford 2020, which played a key role in the town's emissions reduction effort, said during a press conference held today at Bedford Town Hall attended by members of the Bedford Town Board, elected state and county officials, and leaders of partnering civic and environmental entities that the target was reached and surpassed three years ahead of schedule.

“When we announced our goal in 2010, it was visionary, even daring, to propose a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Today, we are thrilled by this momentous achievement,” said Ellen Rouse Conrad, co-president and co-founder of Bedford 2020. “It is the result of hard work by the entire community: elected officials, our partnering organizations, the commitment of our citizens, business leaders, students and religious leaders.”

According to the data generated by ICLEI, a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development, and analyzed by consulting firm VHB, by implementing initiatives in four action areas, Energy, Transportation, Waste and Recycling and Water and Land, Bedford decreased its GHG emissions by a staggering 70%.

“Bedford 2020 is a replicable model for New York State and beyond,” said Midge Iorio, executive director of Bedford 2020. “We have shown that tackling the impact of Climate Change can be done and can be done without disruption or economic loss. “

Adds Iorio: “In fact, all of our actions have helped save money as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Within the energy sector, the Community Choice Aggregation program had a particular impact. Bedford 2020 was a strong advocate for this program, which allows municipalities to make bulk purchases of electricity for all residents and small businesses. As part of that program, Bedford chose a 100% renewable energy supply for its bulk energy contract.

Community Choice Aggregation, a campaign that has now expanded to 27 Westchester County municipalities, is just one of a number of pilot programs championed by Bedford 2020 that contributed to the dramatic reduction in the town’s emissions. Bedford 2020’s initial program, Energize Bedford, allows qualified homeowners to receive a free or reduced cost energy assessment revealing opportunities for energy efficiency upgrades. Led by the Town of Bedford, a consortium of northern Westchester towns received a \$2.5 million grant in 2010 from the U.S. Department of Energy and NYSERDA. Bedford created a pilot energy efficiency program that was later replicated in Northern Westchester and subsequently expanded

statewide as Energize NY. In Bedford, this program has led to energy upgrades in more than 200 homes so far, saving homeowners nearly \$400,000 annually.

“Bedford made an early commitment to address climate change. It was the first Westchester municipality to create a community-wide and municipal Climate Action Plan (2010) and the first in NYS to incorporate goals of Climate Action Plan in Town’s Comprehensive Plan,” said Chris Burdick, Supervisor of the Town of Bedford. “However, in order to achieve and even surpass these goals, required the vision and tenacious persistence of Bedford 2020 who persuaded the town to embrace it, press for it and consider it the norm.”

Bedford 2020 has also supported and advocated for programs including a campaign urging residents of Bedford and Mount Kisco to utilize solar energy, the creation of a Single Stream Waste Recycling program, the purchase of the town’s municipal fleet of electric vehicles and the conversion of municipal lighting to LED.

Founded in 2010 to implement the Town of Bedford’s Climate Action Plan, Bedford 2020’s work has focused on creating a community of advocates willing to take action to address the climate crisis. Education, advocacy and grassroots implementation of both state and local policy initiatives have been the hallmarks of Bedford 2020’s mission. Taking an action-oriented approach, Bedford 2020 examined issues that would have the greatest impact on greenhouse gas emission reduction and worked with residents, elected officials, environmental partners, local businesses, civic organizations, schools and businesses to plan the most effective ways to implement these solutions. The organization also hosted a series of summits on climate action, many of which drew more than 1,000 attendees. The summits were designed to educate, and also to provide specific ways for every community member to take action on climate.

“Over the past decade, our world has changed,” Conrad said. “The climate crisis demands immediate and comprehensive action, much more than 20% GHG emission reduction. The challenge for Bedford 2020 is to use the lessons learned over the past 10 years to create a new paradigm – working with elected officials, policy makers, environmental leaders and our partners and supporters to address energy efficiency, elimination of fossil fuel use, 100% renewable energy and protection of our natural resources.”