

Washington Honored with Sustainable CT Certification

Washington is among twenty-three Connecticut municipalities to be recognized this fall for achieving Sustainable CT certification. Washington met high standards in a broad range of sustainability accomplishments to qualify for the prestigious BRONZE-level certification. The highest level of certification currently offered is silver.

Sustainable CT, a statewide initiative that inspires and supports communities in becoming more efficient, resilient, and inclusive, announced its 2021 fall certified communities this week.

“Achieving Sustainable CT certification is just one of the green initiative’s that Washington is committed to. We are currently in the midst of energy audits for all town owned properties, solar potential for our buildings and E/V for our Public Works Dept. We continue to support the efforts of WEC as well as our dedicated volunteers on the Sustainability Committee. Our goal is not to simply follow other municipalities but rather continue to invest in more sustainable practices.” Jim Brinton, First Selectman

In its application for Sustainable CT certification, Washington demonstrated significant achievements in actions in twelve sustainable impact areas ranging from inclusive community building, thriving local economies, and clean and efficient energy use, to vibrant arts and culture, clean transportation and diverse housing. Washington’s successfully completed actions included promotion and support of local businesses, non-profits and arts and culture activities, invasive species management, pollinator pathway creation and education, town building energy tracking, a farmers forum and an affordable housing plan.

“Washington is fortunate to have a committed group of volunteers who spent countless hours documenting the sustainable activities taking place in town. Additionally, the group worked on many new action items in order to attain bronze certification” said Selectman Jay Hubelbank, who also served as chair of the Sustainability Committee. Mr. Hubelbank noted “the committee chose action items that would help Washington not only meet the certification requirements, but have a lasting impact on the town. The Committee is looking forward to continuing this work, and to ensure that all town committees and boards make decisions with sustainability in mind.”

Mr. Hubelbank stated “The Committee was fortunate to have volunteers representing a number of local organizations as well as individuals with an interest in sustainability. The Committee included Monique Gil-Rodgers and Carrie Rowe, representing the Washington Environmental Council, Chris Charles, Carol Mateo, representing the Planning Commission, Brian Hagenbuch, representing Steep Rock Association, Susie Payne, representing the Conservation Commission and Amy Dyer. The Committee was supported by Michelle Gorra, Economic and Community Development Coordinator and Dennis Buell, Administrative Assistant. While volunteers are essential to the work of the committee, Michelle and Dennis were invaluable to the committee and without their support; the committee could not have completed its work in time to make a submission this year.”

Sustainable CT has seen strong momentum and growth as a valuable, high-impact program. One-hundred twenty-five municipalities have registered for the program, representing 86% of the state’s population. Collectively, sixty-four municipalities, 60% of the state’s communities, have earned Sustainable CT certification. Certification lasts for 3 years, with submissions rigorously evaluated by independent experts and other Sustainable CT partners.

“Congratulations to our newest Sustainable CT certified communities,” said Lynn Stoddard, Executive Director of the program. “We are inspired by the leadership and collaboration of elected officials, staff and residents to make Connecticut communities more inclusive, healthy, connected, and strong.”

The program includes actions that help towns and cities build community connection, social equity, and long-term resilience. The program’s action roadmap and support tools are especially relevant as towns seek practices and resources to promote racial justice, respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and address climate change.

Sustainable CT is independently funded, with strong support from its three founding funders: the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, the Smart Seed Fund, and the Common Sense Fund... Additional support is provided by the Connecticut Green Bank and a growing number of community foundations and other sponsors.

Washington and all 2021 certified communities will be recognized later this month at the Annual Convention of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. For more information, visit www.sustainablect.org.